



# Central Asia's Security: Issues and Implications for U.S. Interests

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## Summary

The Central Asian states (Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, and Uzbekistan) face common security challenges from crime, corruption, terrorism, and faltering commitments to economic and democratic reforms. However, cooperation among them remains halting, so security in the region is likely in the near term to vary by country. Kyrgyzstan's and Tajikistan's futures are most clouded by ethnic and territorial tensions, and corruption in Kazakhstan and Turkmenistan could spoil benefits from the development of their ample energy resources. Authoritarianism and poverty in Uzbekistan could contribute to a succession crisis. On the other hand, Kyrgyzstan's growing but still fragile civil society might help the relatively small nation safeguard its independence. Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan might become regional powers able to champion policy solutions to common Central Asian problems and to resist undue influence from more powerful outside powers, because of their large territories and populations and energy and other resources.

Internal political developments in several bordering or close-by states may have a large impact on Central Asian security. These developments include a more authoritarian and globalist Russia, ethnic and political instability in China and Iran, and re-surfing drug production and Islamic extremism in Afghanistan.

Since the September 11, 2001, terrorist attacks on the United States, the Administration has established bases and other military access in the region for U.S.-led coalition actions in Afghanistan, and it has stressed that the United States will remain interested in the long-term security and stability of the region. U.S. interests in Central Asia include fostering democratization, human rights, free markets, and trade; assisting the development of oil and other resources; and combating terrorism, the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, and drug production and trafficking. The United States seeks to thwart dangers posed to its security by the illicit transfer of strategic missile, nuclear, biological, and chemical weapons technologies, materials, and expertise to terrorist states or groups, and to address threats posed to regional independence by Iran. Some critics counter that the United States has historically had few interests in this region, and advocate only limited U.S. contacts undertaken with Turkey and other friends and allies to ensure U.S. goals. They also argue that the region's energy resources may not measurably enhance U.S. energy security.

Most in Congress have supported U.S. assistance to bolster independence and reforms in Central Asia. The 106<sup>th</sup> Congress authorized a "Silk Road" initiative for greater policy attention and aid for democratization, market reforms, humanitarian needs, conflict resolution, transport infrastructure (including energy pipelines), and border controls. The 108<sup>th</sup> and 109<sup>th</sup> Congresses imposed conditions on foreign assistance to Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan, based on their human rights records. The 110<sup>th</sup> Congress has continued to address concerns about what should be the appropriate level and scope of U.S. interest and involvement in the region.

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## Introduction

The strategic Central Asian region—bordering regional powers Russia, China, and Iran—is an age-old east-west and north-south trade and transport crossroads.<sup>1</sup> After many of the former Soviet Union's republics had declared their independence by late 1991, the five republics of Central Asia followed suit. Since this beginning of independence, surprising to most of the region's population, the Central Asian countries have taken some uneven steps in building defense and other security structures and ties. In some respects, the states have viewed their exposure to outside influences as a mixed blessing. While welcoming new trade and aid, the leaders of Central Asia have been less receptive to calls to democratize and respect human rights.

This report discusses the internal and external security concerns of the Central Asian states. Security concerns faced by the states include mixes of social disorder, crime, corruption, Islamic extremism, terrorism, ethnic and civil conflict, border tensions, water and transport disputes, the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction (WMD), and illegal narcotics. The Central Asian states have tried with varying success to bolster their security forces and regional cooperation to deal with these threats. The United States has provided assistance for these efforts and boosted such aid and involvement after the terrorist attacks on the United States on September 11, 2001, but questions remain about what should be the appropriate level and scope of U.S. interest and presence in the region.

## Central Asia's External Security Context

Central Asia's states have slowly consolidated and extended their relations with neighboring and other countries and international organizations that seek to play influential roles in Central Asia or otherwise affect regional security. These include the bordering or close-by countries of Russia, Afghanistan, China, Iran, Turkey, and the South Caucasus states (see below, **Appendix**), and others such as the United States, Germany, India, Israel, Pakistan, Saudi Arabia, South Korea, and Ukraine. In terms of ties with close-by states, Turkmenistan may be concerned more about bordering Iran and Afghanistan than with non-bordering China, while Kazakhstan may be concerned more about bordering Russia than with non-bordering Afghanistan. While soliciting and managing ties with these states, the Central Asian countries also seek assistance through regional and international organizations, including the World Bank, International Monetary Fund (IMF), Economic Community Organization (ECO), Organization of the Islamic Conference (OIC), the European Union (EU), the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS), the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO), and NATO.

Outside powers, while sometimes competing among themselves for influence in Central Asia, also have some common interests. After September 11, 2001, Russia, China, and the United States cooperated somewhat in combating terrorism in the region. This cooperation has appeared to ebb in recent years, but if the security situation in Afghanistan greatly deteriorates, cooperation

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<sup>1</sup> Central Asia consists of the former Soviet republics of Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, and Uzbekistan. For overviews, see CRS Report 97-1058, *Kazakhstan: Recent Developments and U.S. Interests*, by Jim Nichol; CRS Report 97-690, *Kyrgyzstan: Recent Developments and U.S. Interests*, by Jim Nichol; CRS Report 98-594, *Tajikistan: Recent Developments and U.S. Interests*, by Jim Nichol; CRS Report 97-1055, *Turkmenistan: Recent Developments and U.S. Interests*, by Jim Nichol; and CRS Report RS21238, *Uzbekistan: Recent Developments and U.S. Interests*, by Jim Nichol.

might improve. Cooperation is also needed to combat drug, arms, and human trafficking, manage water resources, develop and deliver energy, and tackle infectious diseases. Iran and Russia collaborated during the latter 1990s to keep the United States and Turkey from becoming involved in developing Caspian Sea oil and natural gas resources. Though this collaboration has ebbed, Russia and Iran continue in varying ways to oppose such involvement. Some observers warn that increasing cooperation or similarity of interests among Russia, Iran, and China in countering the West and in attempting to increase their own influence could heighten threats to the sovereignty and independence of the Central Asian states. Others discount such threats, stressing the ultimately diverging goals of the three states.

## **Security Problems and Progress**

The problems of authoritarian regimes, crime, corruption, terrorism, and ethnic and civil strife and tensions jeopardize the security and independence of all the new states of Central Asia, though to varying degrees. Kazakhstan has faced the potential of separatism in northern Kazakhstan where ethnic Russians are dominant, although this threat appears to have ebbed in recent years with the emigration of hundreds of thousands of ethnic Russians. Tajikistan faces the still-fragile peace that ended its 1992-1997 civil war and the possibility of separatism, particularly by its northern Soghd (formerly Leninabad) region. Kyrgyzstan has faced civil turmoil in creating a greater balance between northern and southern regional interests in central political and economic decision-making. Turkmenistan faces clan and provincial tensions and widespread poverty that could contribute to instability. Uzbekistan faces escalating civil discontent and violence from those whom President Islam Karimov labels as Islamic extremists, from a large ethnic Tajik population, and from an impoverished citizenry. Ethnic Uzbeks and Kyrgyz clashed in 1990 in the Fergana Valley. This fertile valley is divided between Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, and Uzbekistan, and contains about one-fifth of Central Asia's population. All the states are harmed by drug and human trafficking and associated corruption and health problems.

Despite these problems, Turkmenistan's oil and gas wealth could contribute to its long-term stability. Also, its location at a locus of Silk Road trade routes potentially could increase its economic security. Uzbekistan's large population and many resources, including oil, natural gas, and gold, could provide a basis for its stable development and security. Kyrgyzstan's emerging civil society could facilitate entrepreneurial activity and good governance, which eventually might permit the country to increase its budgetary expenditures for defense and security.

It would seem that affinities among the current regional elites would facilitate cooperative ties. Many of the officials in the states learned a common language (Russian) and were Communist Party members. In actuality, however, regional cooperation has been halting.

The vast majority of the people in the Central Asian states suffered steep declines in their quality of life in the first few years after the dissolution of the Soviet Union. The gap widened between the rich and poor, accentuating social tensions and potential instability. Social services such as health and education, inadequate during the Soviet period, declined further. In the new century, however, negative trends in poverty and health have been reversed in much of Central Asia,

according to one World Bank report, although the quality of life remains far below that of Western countries.<sup>2</sup>

Lingering poverty could exacerbate social tensions, separatism, and extremism, although large percentages of the states' populations remain employed in the agricultural sector where economic gyrations have been somewhat buffered. This sector has a surfeit of manpower, however, and cannot readily absorb new workers as the populations continue to increase. Substantial out-migration by many workers to Russia and the return of remittances to relatives in Central Asia have somewhat eased poverty and tension. Russia's equitable treatment of such guest workers has been a major issue in diplomacy between the regional states and Moscow.<sup>3</sup>

## **Islamic Extremism**

Calls for government to be based on Sharia (Islamic law) and the Koran are supported by small but increasing minorities in most of Central Asia. Most of Central Asia's Muslims appear to support the concept of secular government, but the influence of fundamentalist Salafist and extremist Islamic groups is growing.<sup>4</sup> Tajikistan's civil conflict, where the issue of Islam in political life contributed to strife, has been pointed to by several other Central Asian states to justify crackdowns. They also point to Russia's conflict with its breakaway Chechnya region and other areas in Russia's North Caucasus as evidence of the growing threat. In many cases, government crackdowns ostensibly aimed against Islamic extremism have masked clan, political, and religious repression. In some regions of Central Asia, such as Uzbekistan's portion of the Fergana Valley, some Uzbeks kept Islamic practices alive throughout the repressive Soviet period, and some now oppose the secular-oriented Uzbek government. Islamic extremist threats to the regimes may well increase as economic distress continues. Heavy unemployment and poverty rates among youth in the Fergana Valley are widely cited by observers as making youth more vulnerable to recruitment into religious extremist organizations.<sup>5</sup>

Although much of the attraction of Islamic extremism in Central Asia is generated by factors such as poverty and discontent, it is facilitated by groups in Afghanistan, Pakistan, Saudi Arabia, and elsewhere that provide funding, education, training, and manpower to the region. Some of these ties were at least partially disrupted by the U.S.-led coalition actions in Afghanistan and the U.S. call for worldwide cooperation in combating terrorism.<sup>6</sup>

The Central Asian states impose several controls over religious freedom. All except Tajikistan forbid religious parties such as the Islamic Renewal Party (Tajikistan's civil war settlement included the IRP's legalization), and maintain Soviet-era religious oversight bodies, official

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<sup>2</sup> Asad Alam, Mamta Murthi, Ruslan Yemtsov, Edmundo Murrugarra, Nora Dudwick, Ellen Hamilton, and Erwin Tiongson, *Growth, Poverty, and Inequality: Eastern Europe and the Former Soviet Union*, The World Bank, 2005.

<sup>3</sup> Michael Mihalka, "Counter-Insurgency, Counter-Terrorism, State-Building and Security Cooperation in Central Asia," *China and Eurasia Forum Quarterly*, Vol. 4, No. 2, 2006. pp. 131-151.

<sup>4</sup> Most Central Asian Muslims traditionally have belonged to the Sunni branch and the Hanafi school of interpretation. Islamic Sufiism has been significant, as have pre-Islamic customs such as ancestor veneration and visits to shrines.

<sup>5</sup> Ahmad Rashid, *Jihad: The Rise of Militant Islam in Central Asia*, Yale: Yale University Press, 2002; T. Jeremy Gunn, *Sociology of Religion*, Fall 2003, pp. 389-410; Pinar Akcali, *Central Asian Survey*, June 1998, pp. 267-284; Aziz Niyazi, *Religion, State & Society*, March 1998, pp. 39-50.

<sup>6</sup> Zeyno Baran, S. Frederick Starr, Svante E. Cornell, *Islamic Radicalism in Central Asia and the Caucasus: Implications for the EU*, Central Asia-Caucasus Institute, 2006.

Muftiates, and approved clergy. The governments censor religious literature and sermons. According to some analysts, the close government religious control may leave a spiritual gulf that underground radical Islamic groups seek to fill.

Officials in Uzbekistan believe that the country is increasingly vulnerable to Islamic extremism, and they have been at the forefront in Central Asia in combating this threat. Reportedly, thousands of alleged Islamic extremists have been imprisoned and many mosques have been closed. Restrictions were tightened when the legislature in 1998 passed a law on “freedom of worship” banning all unregistered faiths, censoring religious writings, and making it a crime to teach religion without a license. The Uzbek legislature also approved amendments to the criminal code increasing punishments for setting up, leading, or participating in religious extremist, separatist, fundamentalist, or other illegal groups. Public expressions of religiosity are discouraged. Women who wear the hijab and young men who wear beards are faced with government harassment and intimidation. As recommended by the U.S. Commission on International Religious Freedom (USCIRF), Secretary Rice in November 2006 designated Uzbekistan a “country of particular concern” (CPC), where severe religious and human rights violations could lead to U.S. sanctions. The USCIRF recommended such a designation again in 2007. Since 2000, USCIRF also has recommended that Turkmenistan be designated as a CPC.<sup>7</sup>

Uzbekistan and other Central Asian states have arrested many members of Hizb ut-Tahrir (HT; Liberation Party, a politically oriented Islamic movement calling for the establishment of Sharia rule), sentencing them to lengthy prison terms or even death for pamphleteering, but HT reportedly continues to gain adherents. Uzbekistan argues that HT not only advocates terrorism and the killing of apostates but is carrying out such acts.<sup>8</sup> Kyrgyz authorities emphasize the anti-American and antisemitic nature of several HT statements and agree with the Uzbek government on designating the group as an illegal terrorist organization, but some prominent observers in Kyrgyzstan argue that the group is largely pacific and should not be harassed.<sup>9</sup>

## **Terrorist Activities**

Terrorist actions aimed at overthrowing regimes have been of growing concern in all the Central Asian states and are often linked to Islamic extremism. Some analysts caution that many activities the regimes label as terrorist—such as hijacking, kidnapping, robbery, assault, and murder—are often carried out by individuals or groups for economic benefit or for revenge, rather than for political purposes. Also, so-called counter-terrorism may mask repressive actions against religious or political opponents of the regime.

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<sup>7</sup> U.S. Department of State. *International Religious Freedom Report 2006*, September 15, 2006; *Ambassador-at-Large for International Religious Freedom John V. Hanford III on the Release of the State Department's 2006 Designations of Countries of Particular Concern for Severe Violations of Religious Freedom*, November 13, 2006. U.S. Commission on International Religious Freedom. *Annual Report*, May 2, 2005, *Annual Report*, May 3, 2006, and *Annual Report*, May 1, 2007. USCIRF first urged that Uzbekistan be designated a CPC in its 2005 *Annual Report*.

<sup>8</sup> Cheryl Bernard has argued that HT writings borrow heavily from Marxism-Leninism and rely much less on Islamic principles. HT publications have stated that the movement “has adopted the amount [of Islam] which it needs as a political party,” that the Islamic world is the last hope for establishing communism, and that terrorist acts against Western interests are appropriate. *Hizb ut Tahrir—Bolsheviks in the Mosque*, RAND Corporation, nd.

<sup>9</sup> HT literature has demanded the withdrawal of U.S.-led coalition forces and the closure of the coalition's Manas airbase in Kyrgyzstan. *CEDR*, March 13, 2003, Doc. No. CEP -104; *CEDR*, January 7, 2003, Doc. No. CEP-91.



Terrorist activities of the Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan (IMU) and similar groups in the region appeared to have been at least temporarily disrupted by U.S.-led coalition actions in Afghanistan, where several of the groups were based or harbored.<sup>10</sup> Many observers, however, assert that terrorist cells are re-forming in Central Asia and that surviving elements of the IMU, Al Qaeda, and other terrorist groups are infiltrating from Afghanistan and elsewhere.<sup>11</sup>

## Attacks in Uzbekistan

Several explosions outside government buildings in Tashkent on February 16, 1999, were variously reported to have killed 13-28 and wounded 100-351 individuals. Uzbek officials detained hundreds or thousands of suspects, including political oppositionists and HT members. The first trial of 22 suspects in June 1999 resulted in six receiving the death sentence. Karimov in April 1999 alleged that Mohammad Solikh (former Uzbek presidential candidate and head of the banned Erk Party) was the mastermind of the plot, and had received support from the Taliban and Uzbek Islamic extremist Tohir Yuldash. The 22 suspects were described in court proceedings as receiving training in Afghanistan (by the Taliban), Tajikistan, Pakistan, and Russia (by Al Qaeda terrorist Khattab in Chechnya), and as led by Solikh and Yuldash and his ally Jama Namanganiy, the latter two the heads of the IMU. Testimony alleged that Solikh had made common cause with Yuldash and Namanganiy in mid-1997, and that Solikh, Yuldash, Namanganiy, and others had agreed that Solikh would be president and Yuldash defense minister after Karimov was overthrown and a caliphate established. According to an Uzbek media report in early July 1999, the coup plot included a planned attack on Uzbekistan by Namanganiy and other Tajik rebels transiting through Tajikistan and Kyrgyzstan (*see below*).

Another secret trial in August 1999 of six suspects in the bombings (brothers of Solikh or members of his Erk Party) resulted in sentences ranging from 8 to 15 years. In November 2000, the Uzbek Supreme Court convicted twelve persons of terrorism, nine of whom were tried in absentia. The absent Yuldash and Namanganiy were given death sentences, and the absent Solikh 15.5 years in prison. U.S. officials criticized the apparent lack of due process during the trial. Solikh has rejected accusations of involvement in the bombings or membership in the IMU. Yuldash too has eschewed responsibility for the bombings, but warned that more might occur if Karimov does not step down.

On March 28 through April 1, 2004, a series of bombings and armed attacks were launched in Uzbekistan, reportedly killing 47. President Karimov asserted on March 29 that the violence was aimed against his government, in order to “cause panic among our people, to make them lose their trust in the policies being carried out.” An obscure Islamic Jihad Group of Uzbekistan (IJG; *Jama’at al-Jihad al-Islami*, reportedly an alias of the IMU or a breakaway part of the IMU) claimed responsibility for the violence. After the attacks, media censorship intensified. Although some observers alleged that there were wide-scale detentions, the human rights organization

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<sup>10</sup> Also, Russia’s military operations in its breakaway Chechnya region after 1999 may have helped disrupt Al Qaeda plans for Central Asia. The terrorist group was operating terrorist training camps in Chechnya in the late 1990s that it planned to use in part as launching pads for establishing new cells and camps throughout Central Asia. *Defense Intelligence [Agency] Report Details al Qaeda’s Plans for Russia, Chechnya & WMD*, Judicial Watch, Press Office, November 16, 2004. The declassified Intelligence Information Report is dated October 1998.

<sup>11</sup> *CEDR*, March 6, 2003, Doc. No. 217. In testimony in October 2003, then-Assistant Secretary of State Elizabeth Jones stated that “there is a resurgence of the ability of the IMU to operate” in Central Asia and that it “represents a serious threat to the region and therefore to our interests.” U.S. Congress. House International Relations Committee. Subcommittee on the Middle East and Central Asia, Hearing, October 29, 2003.

Freedom House reported in July 2004 that detentions like those of 1999 “did not materialize” and that local trials of suspects appeared to respect the rights of defendants. (Human Rights Watch, however, claimed that virtually all the defendants were tortured.) The defendants in several of these trials were accused of being members of the IJG or HT and of attempting to overthrow the government.

The first national trial of fifteen suspects ended in late August 2004. They all confessed their guilt and received sentences of 11-16 years in prison. Some of the defendants testified that they belonged to the IJG and were trained by Arabs and others at camps in Kazakhstan and Pakistan. They testified that IMU member Najmiddin Jalolov (one of those convicted in absentia in 2000) was the leader of the IJG and linked him to Taliban head Mohammad Omar, Uighur extremist Abu Mohammad, and Osama bin Laden. Over 100 individuals reportedly were convicted in various trials.

Suicide bombings occurred in Tashkent, Uzbekistan, on July 30, 2004, at the U.S. and Israeli embassies and the Uzbek Prosecutor-General's Office. Three Uzbek guards reportedly were killed and about a dozen people were injured. All U.S. and Israeli diplomatic personnel were safe. The next day, then-Secretary of State Colin Powell condemned the “terrorist attacks.” The IMU and the IJG claimed responsibility and stated that the bombings were aimed against the Uzbek and other “apostate” governments (see also CRS Report RS21818, *The 2004 Attacks in Uzbekistan: Context and Implications for U.S. Interests*, by Jim Nichol).

Dozens or perhaps hundreds of civilians were killed or wounded on May 13, 2005, after Uzbek troops fired on demonstrators in the eastern town of Andijon. The protestors had gathered to demand the end of a trial of 23 prominent local businessmen charged with belonging to an Islamic terrorist group. The night before, a group stormed a prison where those on trial were held and released hundreds of inmates. There is a great deal of controversy about whether this group contained foreign-trained terrorists or was composed mainly of the friends and families of the accused. Many freed inmates then joined others in storming government buildings. President Islam Karimov flew to the city to direct operations and reportedly had restored order by late on May 13. The United States and others in the international community have called for an international inquiry, which the Uzbek government has rejected (see also CRS Report RS22161, *Unrest in Andijon, Uzbekistan: Context and Implications*, by Jim Nichol).

## **Attacks in Kyrgyzstan**

In recent years there have been sporadic suicide bombings and other attacks seemingly aimed against the government. One took place at the Oberon market in Bishkek in December 2002, one at a currency exchange outlet in Osh in southern Kyrgyzstan in May 2003, and one in Bishkek that targeted policemen in November 2004. The explosion at the Oberon market killed seven Kyrgyz citizens and injured over 20 people. One person was killed in Osh. Five people, including three Uzbeks, a Uighur citizen of China, and a Kyrgyz, were charged in July 2003 with involvement in the first two bombings. Kyrgyz security officials claimed that they were IMU members trained in Chechnya (by Al Qaeda's Khattab) and Afghanistan and that they had also planned to bomb the U.S. Embassy in Bishkek but were foiled by tight security around the

embassy.<sup>12</sup> In contrast to these terrorist incidents, the U.S. Administration has regarded the March 2005 ouster of Akayev as a popular uprising.

### **Incursions into Kyrgyzstan and Uzbekistan**

Several hundred Islamic extremists and others who fled repression in Uzbekistan and settled in Tajikistan (some of whom were being forced out at Uzbekistan's behest), and rogue groups from Tajikistan that refused to disarm as part of the Tajik peace settlement, entered Kyrgyzstan in July-August 1999. Namanganiy headed the largest guerrilla group. The guerrillas seized hostages, including four Japanese geologists, and occupied several Kyrgyz villages, stating that they would cease hostilities if Kyrgyzstan provided harborage and would release hostages if Uzbekistan released jailed extremists. The guerrillas were variously rumored to be seeking to create an Islamic state in south Kyrgyzstan as a springboard for a jihad in Uzbekistan. Kyrgyzstan's defense minister on October 18, 1999, announced success in forcing virtually all guerrillas out of the southwestern mountains into Tajikistan (some critics argued that the onset of winter weather played an important part in the guerrilla retreat). Uzbek aircraft targeted several alleged guerrilla hideouts in Tajikistan and Kyrgyzstan, eliciting protests from these states of violating airspace. Uzbek President Islam Karimov heavily criticized Kyrgyzstan's then-President Askar Akayev for supposed laxity in suppressing the guerrillas. In November 1999, the Tajik government, which had mercurial relations with Uzbekistan, incensed it by allowing the guerrillas to enter Afghanistan rather than wiping them out (some Tajik opposition elements had ties to Namanganiy).

According to many observers, the incursion indicated both links among terrorism in Afghanistan, Kyrgyzstan, Uzbekistan, and Russia (Chechnya and Dagestan) and the weakness of Kyrgyzstan's security forces in combating threats to its independence. Observers were split on whether this terrorism was related more to Islamic extremism, or to efforts to control narcotics resources and routes.

Dozens of IMU and other insurgents again invaded Kyrgyzstan and Uzbekistan in August 2000, in Kyrgyzstan taking foreigners hostage and leading to thousands of Kyrgyz fleeing the area. Uzbekistan provided air and some other support, but Kyrgyz forces were largely responsible for defeating the insurgents by late October 2000, reporting the loss of 30 Kyrgyz troops. In Uzbekistan, the insurgents launched attacks near Tashkent and in the southeast, leading to thousands of Uzbeks fleeing the areas and the loss of 24 Uzbek troops in putting down the insurgency. Limited engagements by Kyrgyz border troops with alleged insurgents or drug traffickers were reported in late July 2001. According to some reports, the IMU did not engage in major attacks in 2001 because of its increasing attention to bin Laden's agenda, particularly after September 11, 2001, when IMU forces fought alongside bin Laden and the Taliban against the U.S.-led coalition. The activities of the IMU appeared to have been dealt a blow by the U.S.-led coalition.

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<sup>12</sup> *CEDR*, February 16, 2004, Doc. No. CEP-237; June 23, 2003, Doc. No. CEP-178; and May 14, 2003, Doc. No. CEP-443.

## Civil War in Tajikistan

Tajikistan was among the Central Asian republics least prepared and inclined toward independence when the Soviet Union broke up. In September 1992, a loose coalition of nationalist, Islamic, and democratic parties and movements—largely consisting of members of Pamiri and Garmi regional elites who had long been excluded from political power—tried to take over. Kulyabi and Khojenti regional elites, assisted by Uzbekistan and Russia, launched a successful counteroffensive that by the end of 1992 had resulted in 20,000-40,000 casualties and up to 800,000 refugees or displaced persons, about 80,000 of whom fled to Afghanistan. In 1993, the CIS authorized “peacekeeping” in Tajikistan. These forces consisted of Russia’s 201<sup>st</sup> Rifle Division, based in Tajikistan, and token Kazakh, Kyrgyz, and Uzbek troops (the Kyrgyz and Uzbek troops pulled out in 1998-1999).

Terrorist actions were carried out by both sides, and international terrorist groups provided some support to the Tajik opposition. Reportedly, these groups included the IMU, Iran’s Revolutionary Guards, and Al Qaeda.<sup>13</sup> As the civil war wound down in the late 1990s, most of these forces left Tajikistan.

After the Tajik government and opposition agreed to a cease-fire in September 1994, the UNSC established a small U.N. Mission of Observers in Tajikistan (UNMOT) in December 1994 with a mandate to monitor the cease-fire, later expanded to investigate cease-fire violations, monitor the demobilization of Tajik opposition fighters, assist ex-combatants to integrate into society, and offer advice for holding elections. In December 1996, the two sides agreed to set up a National Reconciliation Commission (NRC), an executive body composed equally of government and opposition members. On June 27, 1997, Tajik President Emomali Rakhmanov and opposition leader Seyed Abdullo Nuri signed the *comprehensive peace agreement*, under which Rakhmanov remained president but 30% of ministerial posts were allotted to the opposition. Benchmarks of the peace process were largely met, including the return of refugees, demilitarization of rebel forces, legalization of rebel parties, and the holding of elections. In March 2000, the NRC disbanded, and UNMOT pulled out in May 2000. The CIS declared its peacekeeping mandate fulfilled in June 2000, but Russian troops remain under a 25-year basing agreement. Stability in Tajikistan remains fragile. An unsuccessful insurrection in northern Tajikistan in late 1998 highlights concerns by some observers about secessionist tendencies in the Soghd (formerly Leninabad) region and about ethnic tensions between ethnic Tajiks and Uzbeks in Tajikistan.

## Border Tensions

Borders among the five Central Asian states for the most part were delineated by 1936, based partly on where linguistic and ethnic groups had settled, but mainly on the exigencies of Soviet control over the region. The resulting borders are ill-defined in mountainous areas and extremely convoluted in the fertile Fergana Valley, parts of which belong to Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, and Uzbekistan. Over a dozen tiny enclaves add to the complicated situation. Some in Central Asia have demanded that borders be redrawn to incorporate areas inhabited by co-ethnics, or otherwise dispute the location of borders. Caspian Sea borders have not been fully agreed upon, mainly because of Iranian intransigence, but Russia and Kazakhstan have agreed on delineation to clear the way for exploiting their seabed oil resources. In early 2007, the new Turkmen President

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<sup>13</sup> Osama bin Laden in mid-1991 began dispatching mujahidin to assist in overthrowing the then-communist regime in Tajikistan. National Commission on Terrorist Attacks Upon the United States. *Final Report*, July 23, 2004, pp. 58, 64.

Gurbanguli Berdimukhammedov indicated willingness to negotiate with Azerbaijan to resolve maritime borders, including the ownership of underseas oil and gas resources, and reportedly Berdimukhammedov will visit Azerbaijan in the first half of 2008 to discuss these issues. Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan signed accords in September 2007 pledging to peacefully settle some contentious disputes involving Tajik areas bordering Kyrgyzstan's Batken region.<sup>14</sup>

China has largely settled border delineation with Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, and Tajikistan, reportedly involving "splitting the difference" on many of the disputed territories, which are usually in unpopulated areas. Popular passions were aroused in Kyrgyzstan after a 1999 China-Kyrgyzstan border agreement ceded about 9,000 hectares of mountainous Kyrgyz terrain. Kyrgyz legislators in 2001 opened a hearing and even threatened to try to impeach then-President Akayev. He arrested the leader of the impeachment effort, leading to violent demonstrations in 2002 calling for his ouster and the reversal of the "traitorous" border agreement. Dissident legislators appealed the border agreement to the Constitutional Court, which ruled in 2003 that it was legal. In June 2006, Kyrgyz President Kurmanbek Bakiyev visited China and assuaged Chinese concerns signing a joint declaration with Chairman Hu Jintao which re-affirmed that "the parties will abide strictly by all the agreements and documents signed between the two countries on the border issue."<sup>15</sup>

The problem of ambiguous borders has been an important source of concern to Russia and Kazakhstan. During most of the 1990s, neither Russia nor Kazakhstan wished to push border delineation, Russia because of concerns that it would be conceding that Kazakhstan's heavily ethnic Russian northern regions are part of Kazakhstan, and Kazakhstan because of concerns that delineation might inflame separatism. In 1998, Russia established border patrols along its 4,200 mile border with Kazakhstan for security reasons, and determined to delineate the border. By late 2004, most of the Russian-Kazakh border had been delimited. To head off separatist proclivities in the north, Kazakhstan reorganized administrative borders in northern regions to dilute the influence of ethnic Russians, established a strongly centralized government to limit local rule, and moved its capital northward. These and other moves apparently contributed to political resignation among many ethnic Russians, and many emigrated to Russia.

Uzbekistan has had contentious border talks with all the other Central Asian states. As of early 2008, reportedly about one-third of Uzbekistan's 680-mile border with Kyrgyzstan still had not been formally agreed upon after seven years of border talks.<sup>16</sup> Legislators and others in Kyrgyzstan in 2001 vehemently protested a border delineation agreement with Uzbekistan reached by the two prime ministers that ceded a swath of the Kyrgyz Batken region, ostensibly to improve Uzbek access to its Sokh enclave in Kyrgyzstan. Faced with this protest, the Kyrgyz government sent a demarche to Uzbekistan repudiating any intention to cede territory. Similarly, in late 2004 Kyrgyz legislators demanded that Uzbekistan's Shohimardon enclave in Kyrgyzstan (ceded in the 1930s) be returned.<sup>17</sup>

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<sup>14</sup> *CEDR*, September 18, 2007, Doc. No. CEP-950239.

<sup>15</sup> *CEDR*, February 28, 2003, Doc. No. CEP-284; March 9, 2003, Doc. No. CEP-27; October 26, 2006, Doc. No. CEP-950306.

<sup>16</sup> *CEDR*, February 17, 2007, Doc. No. CEP-950088; September 8, 2007, Doc. No. CEP-950162; December 13, 2007, Doc. No. CEP-950238; January 12, 2008, Doc. No. CEP-950025.

<sup>17</sup> *CEDR*, November 6, 2004, Doc. No. CEP-130.

Uzbekistan's unilateral efforts to delineate and fortify its borders with Kazakhstan in the late 1990s led to tensions. In September 2002, however, the Kazakh and Uzbek presidents announced that delineation of their 1,400 mile border was complete, and some people in previously disputed border villages began to relocate if they felt that the new borders cut them off from their "homeland." However, many people continued to ignore the new border or were uncertain of its location, leading to several shootings of Kazakh citizens by Uzbek border troops.

The Uzbek and Tajik presidents signed an accord in October 2002 delimiting most of their 720-mile joint border. Contention has continued over about 15-20% of the border. In October 2006, the head of the Tajik border guard service complained that demarcation was being hindered by Uzbekistan's peremptory placement of border markers, barbed wire and fences.<sup>18</sup>

Besides border claims, other problems revolve around whether borders are open or closed. Open borders within the Central Asian states after the breakup of the Soviet Union were widely viewed as fostering trafficking in drugs and contraband and free migration, so border controls increasingly have been tightened in all the states.

Uzbekistan mined its borders with Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan in 1999, intending to protect it against terrorist incursions, but in fact leading to many civilian Kyrgyz and Tajik casualties. Kyrgyzstan has demanded that Uzbekistan clear mines it has sown along the borders, including some allegedly sown on Kyrgyz territory, but Uzbekistan has asserted that it will maintain the minefields to combat terrorism. (Kyrgyzstan too has raised tensions by sowing mines and blowing up mountain passes along its borders with Tajikistan.) Border tensions between Uzbekistan and Turkmenistan also flared in late 2002, after Turkmenistan accused Uzbek officials of complicity in the coup attempt. Uzbekistan's economic problems led it in mid-2002 to impose heavy duties on imports and at the beginning of 2003 to close its borders to "suitcase trading" (small-scale, unregulated trading), heightening tensions with bordering states. Sharp disagreements remain between Uzbekistan and Tajikistan on mine clearing, Uzbek restrictions on Tajik transportation, clashes between Uzbek and Tajik border guards, and the Uzbek visa regime with Tajikistan.<sup>19</sup>

Iran and Turkmenistan are the major impediment to wider agreement on Caspian Sea border delineation and resource use and access, contributing to tensions and the build-up of naval forces. Iran's intransigence led Russia in August 2002 to conduct the largest naval maneuvers in its history in the northern Caspian. Kazakhstan announced its intent to form a navy in early 2003, leading to protests from the Russian Foreign Ministry, but Kazakh military officials emphasized their determination to proceed with plans to protect their offshore oil fields and maritime borders.

## **Crime and Corruption**

Corruption is a serious threat to democratization and economic growth in all the states. The increasing amount of foreign currency entering the states as the result of foreign oil and natural gas investments, the low pay of most government bureaucrats, and inadequate laws and norms are

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<sup>18</sup> CEDR, October 20, 2006, Doc. No. CEP-950282. In the case of contention between the residents of the Batken region in southern Kyrgyzstan and the bordering Soghd region in northern Tajikistan, the U.N. Development Program has implemented initiatives to create mutual trust and the sharing of trans-border resources such as water. CEDR, March 20, 2007, Doc. No. CEP-950134; October 26, 2006, Doc. No. CEP-950045.

<sup>19</sup> CEDR, January 24, 2007, Doc. No. CEP-950088.

conducive to the growth of corruption. Perhaps most significantly, the weakness of the rule of law permits the Soviet-era political patronage and spoils system to continue.<sup>20</sup> Organized crime networks have expanded in all the Central Asian states, and have established ties with crime groups worldwide that are involved in drug, arms, and human trafficking. All the states serve as origin, transit, or destination states for human trafficking. Crime groups collude with local border and other officials to transport people to the Middle East or other destinations for forced labor or prostitution.<sup>21</sup>

Sizeable revenues from oil and gas exports have exacerbated corruption in Turkmenistan and Kazakhstan. The Turkmen president controls a “presidential fund,” that receives 50% of gas revenues and is ostensibly used for economic development, though budgetary transparency is lacking on how the fund is used.<sup>22</sup> Perhaps the most sensational allegations of corruption have involved signing bonuses and other payments in the 1990s by U.S. energy companies operating in Kazakhstan (or by their proxies) that allegedly were funneled into Swiss bank accounts linked to Kazakh officials, allegedly including Nazarbayev. U.S. officials concurred with a Swiss decision to freeze the funds and open investigations in 1999-2000. The *New York Times* reported that Nazarbayev unsuccessfully raised the issue of unfreezing some of these accounts during his visit with President Bush in December 2001.<sup>23</sup> A U.S. federal trial of U.S. businessman James Giffen on the bribery charges has been repeatedly delayed. Another case investigated by the U.S. Security and Exchange Commission (SEC)—involving bribes to Kazakh officials by the Swedish-Swiss firm ABB—was settled in mid-2004.<sup>24</sup>

## Economic and Defense Security

The Central Asian states have worked to bolster their economic and defense capabilities by seeking assistance from individual Western donors such as the United States, by trying to cooperate with each other, and by joining myriad international organizations. Regional cooperation has faced challenges from differential economic development and hence divergent interests among the states, and from more nationalistic postures. Cooperation also is undermined by what the states view as Uzbekistan's overbearing impulses. Regional cooperation problems are potentially magnified by the formation of extra-regional cooperation groups such as the CIS

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<sup>20</sup> Transparency International, *Corruption Perceptions Index*, online at <http://www.transparency.org/>. According to the “Control of Corruption” index of the World Bank, corruption in Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan ebbed somewhat in the early 2000s, but increased in 2005-2006; declined slightly over the time period 1996-2006 in Kyrgyzstan and perhaps in Turkmenistan; and increased over the time period 1996-2006 in Tajikistan. The World Bank. Governance Matters 2007: Country Data Reports, online at [http://info.worldbank.org/governance/wgi2007/pdf\\_country.asp](http://info.worldbank.org/governance/wgi2007/pdf_country.asp).

<sup>21</sup> U.S. Department of State. *Trafficking in Persons Report*, June 12, 2007. In the 2006 and 2007 reports, Uzbekistan was placed in “tier three,” among those countries that do not comply with minimum standards for the elimination of trafficking and are not making significant efforts to do so. Tier three countries may be subject to U.S. aid restrictions.

<sup>22</sup> The non-governmental organization Global Witness alleged in 2006 that the late Turkmen President Niyazov personally controlled a vast portion of this gas wealth. The NGO raised concerns that organized crime groups were involved in these exports and urged the European Union to limit trade ties with Turkmenistan. Global Witness. *It's a Gas: Funny Business in the Turkmen-Ukraine Gas Trade*, April 2006.

<sup>23</sup> *New York Times*, December 11, 2002, p. A16; *Interfax-Kazakhstan*, February 5, 2003; *Washington Post*, June 10, 2002, p. A12; *Financial Times* (London), April 16, 2002, p. 12; *Agence France Presse*, September 24, 2001; *PR Newswire*, January 10, 2001; *Washington Post*, September 25, 2000, p. A1. A National Fund was created in early 2001 by the Kazakh National Bank for receipt of oil revenues, and operates under strict accounting standards.

<sup>24</sup> *Eurasianet*, September 17, 2004; *New York Law Journal*, July 7, 2004, p. 1; *Financial Times* (London), July 7, 2004, p. 27; *Dow Jones News Service*, October 27, 2005; Peter Maass, “The Fuel Fixers,” *The New York Times*, December 23, 2007.

Collective Security Treaty Organization (CST), NATO's Partnership for Peace (PFP), and the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO).<sup>25</sup> Each group reflects the diverging interests of Russia, the United States, and China, although the fact that each group stresses anti-terrorism would seem to provide motivation for cooperation.

All of the Central Asian states have been faced with creating adequate military and border forces and have had vexing problems with military financing and training. At first dependent on the contract service of Russian troops and officers in their nascent militaries, the states now rely little on such manpower, but continue to depend heavily on training and equipment ties with Russia. After September 11, 2001, the states benefitted from boosted U.S. military training and equipment aid.

The capabilities of the military, border, and other security forces are limited, compared to those of neighboring states such as Russia, China, or Iran. Military forces range in manpower from about 7,600 in Tajikistan (excluding Russians) to 65,800 in Kazakhstan (see **Table A-1**). The states have variously solicited training and technical assistance from the United States, Turkey, China, and other countries, have forged security ties with the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) and NATO's PFP, and cooperated in regional bodies such as SCO and GUAM.

Economic cooperation among the Central Asian states began to develop by the mid 1990s, leading to several initiatives, but by 2008 showed few real results. Cooperation was stymied by Uzbekistan's price controls and restrictions on currency convertibility, tariffs levied by the states on Kyrgyzstan because of its membership in the World Trade Organization, and border restrictions that stifled trade.<sup>26</sup> A customs union formed between Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan in January 1994 (Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan joined later) achieved some modest early success as a regional forum. It was renamed the Central Asian Economic Community (CAEC) in July 1998. Criticizing its scant achievements, Karimov in early 2001 proposed that it become a forum for "wide-ranging" policy discussions, and it was renamed the Central Asian Cooperation Organization in late 2001 (CACO). CACO suffered a serious blow in September 2003 when Kazakhstan joined Belarus, Russia, and Ukraine in proclaiming the building of a "common economic space." In October 2004, CACO abandoned its focus on creating a regional identity separate from Russia by admitting Russia as a member. Finally, in October 2005, CACO announced that its membership would be "integrated" into the Eurasian Economic Community (a Russia-led economic cooperation group consisting of Russia, Belarus, Kazakhstan, and Tajikistan).<sup>27</sup>

Among other regional economic cooperation initiatives, the Asian Development Bank in 1997 helped launch the Central Asia Regional Economic Cooperation program (CAREC; members are China, Afghanistan, Azerbaijan, Mongolia, and all the Central Asian states except Turkmenistan) to improve living standards and reduce poverty in its member states through regional economic collaboration. Also participating in CAREC are the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development (EBRD), the International Monetary Fund (IMF), the Islamic Development Bank,

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<sup>25</sup> Uzbekistan joined another regional organization, GUAM (named after members Georgia, Ukraine, Azerbaijan, and Moldova) in 1999, but dropped out at the end of 2005.

<sup>26</sup> Analyst Martin Spechler has argued that the Central Asian region lacks the impetus to cooperation provided by a perceived outside threat. *Problems of Post-Communism*, November/December 2002, p. 46.

<sup>27</sup> Farkhad Tolipov, *Central Asia - Caucasus Analyst*, December 1, 2004; *CEDR*, November 2, 2005, Doc. No. CEP-379002; November 9, 2005, Doc. No. CEP-27030.



the United Nations Development Program (UNDP), and the World Bank. For the period from 2006 to 2008, CAREC planned to provide over \$2.3 billion for more than 40 projects. The main focus is on developing selected transport routes as a spur to cooperation and development.

### **The Collective Security Treaty (CST)**

The Central Asian states generally have criticized the CIS as both ineffective and dominated by Russia. Nonetheless, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, and Tajikistan joined Russia and Belarus in reaffirming the CST when it came up for renewal in 1999.<sup>28</sup> Turkmenistan did not sign the treaty, citing its neutral status. Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, and Tajikistan participate in CIS (in actuality, Russian) air defense and air force programs and exercises. Uzbekistan withdrew from the CST in 1999 but was formally re-admitted in August 2006. Uzbekistan held a special forces exercise with Russia in September 2006, and the two sides concluded an accord permitting each other access to military facilities. These moves appeared to mark Russia's increasing military influence throughout Central Asia, according to some observers.

### **The Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO)**

In 1996, Russia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, and Tajikistan, signed the "Shanghai Treaty" with China pledging the sanctity and substantial demilitarization of mutual borders, and in 1997 they signed a follow-on treaty demilitarizing the 4,000 mile former Soviet-Chinese border. In 2001, Uzbekistan joined the group, re-named the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO). The states signed a Shanghai Convention on joint fighting against what President Jiang Zemin termed "the forces of separatism, terrorism and extremism." China has used the SCO to pressure the Central Asian states to deter their ethnic Uighur minorities from supporting separatism in China's Xinjiang province, and to get them to extradite Uighurs fleeing China. In addition to security cooperation, China stressed the "huge economic and trade potential" of regional cooperation.<sup>29</sup> In an interview explaining why Uzbekistan joined, President Karimov seemed to indicate that the primary motive was to protect Uzbekistan's interests against any possible moves by the SCO. He appeared to stress the possible military aid the SCO might provide to beef up the Uzbek armed forces and help it combat terrorism, and to dismiss the capability of the SCO engaging in effective joint action. He also indicated that Uzbekistan wished to forge closer relations with China.<sup>30</sup>

Although Karimov had criticized the SCO as ineffective, in August 2003 he insisted that Uzbekistan host the SCO Regional Anti-Terrorism Structure (RATS). Appearing to return to his earlier assessment, in April 2004 he criticized the SCO for failing to aid Uzbekistan during the March-April 2004 attacks and concluded that Uzbekistan should "rely on its own power." Some observers argued that these vacillations reflected a policy of playing off the major powers to maximize aid. This policy appeared to pay dividends at the June 2004 SCO summit, when China reportedly proffered up to \$1.25 billion in grants and loans to Karimov and Russia up to \$2.5 billion in investment.

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<sup>28</sup> The CST calls for signatories to abjure force against each other and to assist one another in case of outside acts of aggression. See *CEDR-SOV-92-101*, May 26, 1992, pp. 8-9.

<sup>29</sup> Open Source Center. *China: Daily Report*, September 10, 2002, Doc. No. CPP-131.

<sup>30</sup> *The Times of Central Asia*, June 17, 2001.

Indicating Uzbekistan's closer ties after the 2005 events in Andijon (see below) with both Russia and China, Karimov traveled to Shanghai in June 2006 to attend the SCO summit and endorsed a communique criticizing U.S. foreign policy. In a speech just before leaving for the summit, Karimov urged "joint action" by the SCO members to combat terrorism (seemingly contradicting his 2001 speech; see above), rather than mere diplomatic statements.<sup>31</sup> In September 2006, the first deputy head of Russia's Federal Security Service (FSB) became the leader of RATS, perhaps indicating Russia's growing role in the SCO. According to some reports, however, the Uzbek security service closely oversees the work of RATS, reflecting Karimov's distrust of Russia despite the closer Russian-Uzbek security ties since the events in Andijon. Also in September 2006, Chinese and Tajik military forces held a joint exercise at a Russian military base in Tajikistan. In August 2007, an SCO military exercise took place in Xinjiang and southern Russia, the first that included representatives of all member countries (although Russian and Chinese forces predominated).

For the Central Asian states, the SCO is seen as balancing Russian and Chinese influence, since the regional states also belong to the economic and security organizations that are part of the Russia-led CIS.<sup>32</sup> At the same time, according to some observers, regional leaders have preferred the economic and security cooperation offered by the SCO over what they view as U.S. advocacy of democratic "color revolutions."<sup>33</sup> It may also be the case that Central Asian leaders value the SCO's economic prospects more than its security prospects, given the history of the group. The regional leaders may have devalued SCO as a security organization after September 11, 2001, when U.S. and Western military activities in Afghanistan demonstrated the lack of effectiveness of the SCO in combating terrorism. SCO members did not respond collectively to U.S. requests for assistance but mainly as individual states. Further challenges to the prestige of the SCO as a collective security organization occurred in 2005, when it failed to respond to the coup in Kyrgyzstan or to civil unrest in Uzbekistan.<sup>34</sup>

## **Water Resources**

Growing demand for limited water resources may threaten the stability of the region and hinder economic development (although more efficient water use would be ameliorative). The main sources of water for Uzbekistan, Turkmenistan, and part of Kazakhstan are the Amu Darya and Syr Darya Rivers that flow from Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan. Since these latter two states are poor in oil and gas, the Central Asian states agreed in 1998 to exchange oil and gas for water. However, the agreement has foundered, in part because no oversight body was created, and relations between the upstream and downstream states have suffered. Profligate wasting of water because of ill-designed and deteriorating irrigation canals, lack of water meters, and efforts to boost cotton production have drained the Amu and Syr Darya Rivers so that decreased amounts of

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<sup>31</sup> CEDR, June 18, 2006, Doc. No. CEP-950084.

<sup>32</sup> CEDR, August 22, 2007, Doc. No. CEP-25001; CDR, August 18, 2007, Doc. No. CPP-94003; Artyom Matusov, "Energy Cooperation in the SCO: Club or Gathering?" *China and Eurasia Forum Quarterly*, Vol. 5, No. 3 (2007) pp. 83-99.

<sup>33</sup> Konstantin Syroezhkin, "China in Central Asia: from Trade to Strategic Partnership," *Central Asia and the Caucasus*, No. 3 (2007), pp. 40-51.

<sup>34</sup> According to analyst Dru Gladney, security cooperation beyond pro forma exercises has mostly involved "the occasional repatriation of suspected Uighur separatists." U.S.-China Economic & Security Review Commission. Hearing on China's Role in the World: Is China a Responsible Stakeholder? Panel IV: China's Involvement in the SCO. *China's 'Uighur Problem' and the SCO*, August 3, 2006.

water reach the Aral Sea bordering Uzbekistan and Kazakhstan. Also, Kyrgyzstan has endeavored to maximize its hydro-electricity generation, which contributes to downstream water shortages in the summer and floods in the winter. Population growth in downstream countries is a looming problem. The shrinking of the Aral Sea has exacerbated region-wide environmental problems.<sup>35</sup>

The lack of regional cooperation is illustrated by Tajikistan's plans to create a large reservoir on the Zarafshon River for hydro-electricity production and to store water for its own use. Uzbekistan has opposed this project because it allegedly would greatly reduce the flow of water to its agricultural Samarkand, Navoi, and Buxoro regions.<sup>36</sup> Elements of this dispute were reflected in debate in the U.N. General Assembly in October 2007, where Tajikistan raised the issue of creating a regional water-sharing legal regime.<sup>37</sup> Uzbekistan also raised concerns about Turkmenistan's planned diversion of water from the Amu Darya to create a new 150 billion cubic meter lake (currently under construction), which could threaten Uzbek cotton production. In 2003, Uzbekistan seized a part of the Karshinskiy Canal in Turkmenistan, the only source of water for Uzbekistan's Kashkardarya oblast, after bilateral water-sharing talks broke down. Reportedly, visiting Uzbek President Islam Karimov discussed water-sharing issues with Turkmen President Gurbanguly Berdimuhamedow in October 2007. The need for even wider discussion of water resources is illustrated by China's efforts to divert Irtysh River water to its Xinjiang region, reducing such resources for Russia and Kazakhstan (the latter two states also vie over this water), and disputes between Russia and Kazakhstan over whether the former can sell trans-border water under international law.<sup>38</sup>

## **Energy and Transport**

According to the U.S. Department of Energy (DOE), the Caspian region is emerging as a significant source of oil and gas for world markets. Oil resources, DOE reports, may be comparable to those of Qatar (a conservative estimate) or Libya (a high-end estimate). Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan, and Kazakhstan rank among the top countries in terms of proven and probable gas reserves, comparable in terms of proven reserves with Nigeria. Kazakhstan possesses the Caspian region's largest proven oil reserves at 9-17.6 billion barrels, according to DOE, and also possesses 65 trillion cubic feet (tcf) of natural gas. The Tengiz oil field began to be exploited by Chevron-Texaco and Kazakhstan in a consortium during 1993 (U.S. Exxon-Mobil and Russia's LUKoil later joined). The Karachaganak onshore field is being developed by British Petroleum, Italy's Eni, U.S. Chevron-Texaco, and LUKoil, who estimate reserves of more than 2.4 billion barrels of oil and 16 tcf of gas. In 2002, another consortium led by Eni reported that the Kashagan offshore field had between 7-9 billion barrels of proven oil reserves, comparable to those of Tengiz. Kazakhstan's oil exports currently are about one million barrels per day (bpd). Private foreign investors have become discouraged in recent months by harsher government terms, taxes, and fines.

Turkmenistan possesses about 101tcf of proven gas reserves, according to DOE, among the largest in the world. In the late 1980s, Turkmenistan was the world's fourth largest natural gas

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<sup>35</sup> Kazakhstan has managed to stabilize the northern part of the Aral Sea, and water levels are increasing. "Dying Sea Makes Comeback," *Voice of America*, Press Release, May 31, 2007.

<sup>36</sup> CEDR, January 25, 2008, Doc. No. CEP-950291. However, a Tajik official claimed in late January 2008 that the two countries had made progress in resolving concerns over the reservoir. *CEDR*, January 25, 2008, Doc. No. CEP-950225.

<sup>37</sup> *CEDR*, November 14, 2007, Doc. No. CEP-950234.

<sup>38</sup> *CEDR*, February 27, 2007, Doc. No. CEP-462002; October 29, 2004, Doc. No. CEP-338.

producer. Uzbekistan produced about 2.1tcf of gas in 2005, making it among the top ten producers in the world. Currently, most of this gas is used domestically, but some is exported to its neighbors and to Russia. (See also CRS Report RS21190, *Caspian Oil and Gas: Production and Prospects*, by Bernard A. Gelb).

The land-locked Central Asian region must rely on the uncertain benevolence and stability of its surrounding neighbors to reach outside markets. Regional transport links include the railway from Druzhba in Kazakhstan to Urumchi in China, opened in 1992. A railway link between Iran and Turkmenistan opened in 1996. The "Friendship Bridge" linking Uzbekistan and Afghanistan was closed by Uzbekistan in 1997 as a result of drug and arms trafficking and terrorist threats. It was re-opened in 2002 with U.S. assistance following the ouster of the Taliban. A bridge linking Tajikistan and Afghanistan was opened in 2002 (funded by the Aga Khan) and another was completed in 2007 (U.S.-funded).

The EU-sponsored Transport Corridor Europe-Caucasus-Central Asia (TRACECA) program started in 1993, aimed at the re-creation of the "silk road" linking East and West. The transport routes would bypass Russia and enhance the independence of the Central Asian states. TRACECA has funded the refurbishment of rail lines and roads, and is supporting the building of a rail line from Uzbekistan through Kyrgyzstan to China. Another EU program, INOGATE (Interstate Oil and Gas Transport to Europe), focuses on rehabilitation, modernization, and extension of oil and gas pipelines from the Caspian region to the West. Some in Central Asia have criticized the EU or regional states for tardy implementation.<sup>39</sup>

To a significant degree, Central Asia's energy security is dependent on stability in the South Caucasus and beyond. The Caspian Pipeline Consortium's oil pipeline from Kazakhstan to Russia's Black Sea port of Novorossiisk (see below) is vulnerable to instability in Russia's North Caucasus area. An oil pipeline was constructed from Baku through Georgia to Turkey's Mediterranean port of Ceyhan (termed the Baku-Tbilisi-Ceyhan or BTC pipeline; it receives some oil shipped by tanker from Kazakhstan), and an associated gas pipeline from Baku to Turkey face problems of instability in Azerbaijan, Georgia, and Turkey. Whereas terrorists such as Kurdish groups in Turkey are usually able to only temporarily disable pipelines, political and ethnic instability and separatism in the North and South Caucasus may pose greater problems.

The Central Asian states face pressures from Russia's energy firms and government to yield portions of their energy wealth to Russia and to limit ties with Western firms. These efforts include some free-market moves such as building pipelines and obtaining shares in Central Asian consortiums, but Russia's state-controlled firms and government sometimes pursue negative measures such as trying to block Western investment and Central Asian exports.

Turkmenistan is currently largely dependent on Russian export routes. In 1993, Russia had halted Turkmen gas exports to Western markets through its pipelines, diverting Turkmen gas to other Eurasian states that had trouble paying for the gas. In 1997, Russia cut off these shipments because of transit fee arrears and other problems. In 1998 and intermittently thereafter, Turkmenistan has tried to get higher prices for its gas from Russia's natural gas firm Gazprom. Putin's talks in January, 2002 with then-president Niyazov on long-term gas supplies were unproductive because Niyazov balked at the low prices offered. Appearing resigned to getting less than the world market price, Niyazov signed a 25-year accord with Putin in April 2003 on

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<sup>39</sup> CEDR, March 23, 2004, Doc. No. CEP-384.

supplying Russia about 200 billion cubic feet of gas in 2004 (about 12% of production), rising up to 2.83 trillion cubic feet (tcf) from 2009 to 2028, perhaps then tying up most if not all of Turkmenistan's future production.

Turkmenistan halted gas shipments to Russia at the end of 2004 in an attempt to get a higher gas price but settled for all-cash rather than partial barter payments. In early 2006, Turkmenistan again requested higher gas prices from Russia, because Russia's state-controlled Gazprom gas firm had raised the price it charged for customers receiving the gas that it had purchased from Turkmenistan. In June 2006, Turkmenistan threatened to cut off gas shipments at the end of July unless Gazprom agreed to a price increase from \$65 per 35.314 thousand cubic feet to \$100 for the rest of 2006. In early September 2006, Gazprom agreed to pay \$100 per 35.314 thousand cubic feet from 2007 to the end of 2009, and Turkmenistan pledged to supply 1.483 tcf in 2006, 1.765 tcf in 2007-2008, and up to 2.83 tcf from 2009-2028. In November 2007, however, Turkmenistan requested still another price increase, and the two sides agreed on a price of \$130 per 35.314 thousand cubic feet for the first half of 2008 and \$150 for the remainder of 2008, and a price thereafter based on "market principles."

Seeking alternatives, Turkmenistan in late 1997 opened a 125-mile gas pipeline from a Turkmen gas field to the Iranian pipeline system for use in northern Iran. Turkmenistan provided 282.5 bcf of gas to Iran in 2006 and reportedly a larger amount in 2007. At the end of 2007, however, Turkmenistan suddenly suspended gas shipments, causing hardship in northern Iran. The National Iranian Gas Company allegedly termed the suspension "immoral behavior," and Iranian legislators also criticized Turkmenistan. It was widely reported in Iranian media that Turkmen demands for higher payments were the main reason for the cut-off. This was denied by the Turkmen Foreign Ministry, although it accused Iran of payment arrearages, a charge in turn rejected by the Iranian Foreign Ministry.<sup>40</sup>

A 1998 framework agreement and a May 1999 gas supply agreement between Turkey and Turkmenistan envisaged Turkmen gas flows to Turkey when a pipeline either traversing Iran or a trans-Caspian route through Azerbaijan and Georgia were built.<sup>41</sup> In September 1999, Turkmenistan also joined Azerbaijan, Georgia, and Turkey in signing a declaration on a trans-Caspian gas pipeline. Plans for a trans-Caspian gas pipeline, however, were derailed in 2000 by a clash between Turkmenistan and Azerbaijan over how much gas each nation could ship through the Baku-Turkey leg of the prospective gas pipeline, and by Turkmenistan's rejection of proposals from the PSG consortium formed to build the trans-Caspian leg of the pipeline. Turkmenistan's efforts to interest investors in building a gas pipeline through Afghanistan to Pakistan have been unsuccessful because of the Afghan government's uncertain control over its territory and questions about Turkmenistan's stability.

According to some analysts, Kazakhstan's development of multiple oil export routes that no one transit country controls is enhancing its energy independence and security. In the early 1990s, Russia placed strict quotas on oil shipments through its pipelines to pressure Kazakhstan to yield shares in energy projects. Russia's restrictions on Tengiz oil exports to Europe were eased slightly

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<sup>40</sup> CEDR, January 22, 2008, Doc. No. CEP-950327; January 24, 2008, Doc. No. CEP-950304; *Iran: Daily Report*, January 21, 2008, Doc. No. IAP-11017 and Doc. No. IAP-950027; and January 24, 2008, Doc. No. IAP-950014. Iranian President Mahmud Ahmadinezhad visited northern areas to indicate government concern about the energy crisis during the cold season.

<sup>41</sup> The gas pipeline from Tabriz to Ankara began operations in December 2001, but Turkmen gas is not yet being sold to Turkey through this pipeline.

in 1996 after the consortium admitted LUKoil and after Gazprom was admitted to another consortium. Russian shareholders have a controlling interest, 44%, in the Caspian Pipeline Consortium, which in 2001 completed building a 930-mile oil pipeline from Kazakhstan to Russia's Black Sea port of Novorossiisk, the region's first new pipeline capable of carrying 560,000 bpd. The completion of the pipeline provided a major boost to Russia's economic leverage in the Caspian region, since it controls the pipeline route and terminus, although Kazakhstan in theory also gained some say-so as an partner in the Caspian Pipeline Consortium.

Perhaps marking dissatisfaction with Moscow's use of pipeline pressure to extract economic concessions, in December 1997, Kazakh President Nazarbayev, Azerbaijani President Heydar Aliyev, and Georgian President Eduard Shevardnadze agreed to explore building an oil pipeline under the Caspian Sea to link up with the proposed BTC pipeline. In October 1998, these leaders were joined by Uzbek President Karimov and the Turkish president in signing an "Ankara Declaration" endorsing the BTC route with a possible trans-Caspian extension. Turkmenistan later endorsed this route. On November 18, 1999, Kazakhstan, Azerbaijan, Georgia, and Turkey also signed an "Istanbul Protocol" on construction of the BTC pipeline. The pipeline was completed in 2006. The pipeline has a capacity of one million barrels per day but at least initially will operate below capacity. Kazakhstan is upgrading its port at Atyrau and in August 2007 signed a memorandum of understanding with Azerbaijan on using the BTC as an added export route.<sup>42</sup>

Kazakhstan and China have completed an oil pipeline from Atasu in central Kazakhstan to the Xinjiang region of China (a distance of about 597 miles). Kazakhstan began delivering oil through the pipeline in May 2006. Initial capacity is 146.6 million barrels per year. At Atasu, it links to another pipeline from Kumkol, also in central Kazakhstan, and will eventually link to Atyrau on Kazakhstan's Caspian Sea coast. Work on this 473-mile pipeline from Kumkol to Atyrau began in late 2007 and is expected to be completed in 2009.

## **Nonproliferation of Weapons of Mass Destruction**

International concerns over the proliferation risks posed by Central Asia's nuclear research and power reactors, uranium mines, milling facilities, and associated personnel have been heightened by increasing Western, Russian, and Central Asian media reports of attempted diversions of nuclear materials to terrorist states or criminal groups. Nuclear fuel cycle facilities are often only minimally secured, and personnel may be poorly paid, creating targets of opportunity. Kazakhstan is reported to possess one-fourth of the world's uranium reserves, and Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan are among the world's top producers of yellow cake (low enriched uranium).<sup>43</sup> Major customers for Kazakhstan's yellow cake have included the United States and Europe. Kazakhstan's Ulba fuel fabrication facility provides nuclear fuel pellets to Russia and other NIS. Kazakhstan had a fast breeder reactor at its Caspian port of Aktau, the world's only nuclear desalinization facility. Decommissioned in April 1999, it has nearly 300 metric tons of enriched uranium and plutonium

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<sup>42</sup> On January 24, 2007, a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) was signed by the firms in the TengizChevroil consortium (ChevronTexaco, ExxonMobil, LukoilArco, and the Kazakh state oil and gas firm KazMunayGaz) and those in the KCO consortium (Eni-Agip, Total, ExxonMobil, Royal-Dutch Shell, ConocoPhillips, Inpex, and KazMunayGaz) to put together port facilities and tankers to transport Kazakh oil to Azerbaijan. Vladimir Socor, *Eurasia Daily Monitor*, January 25, 2007. See also *Dow Jones Commodities Service*, June 28, 2007. Another MOU was signed by KazMunayGaz and Azerbaijan's SOCAR state oil company on August 8, 2007, on oil transport cooperation.

<sup>43</sup> After the Soviet breakup, independent Kazakhstan was on paper one of the world's major nuclear weapons powers, but in reality these weapons were controlled by Russia. On April 21, 1995, the last nuclear warheads were transferred to Russia.

spent fuel in ill-kept storage pools. Uzbek's Navoi mining and milling facility exports yellow cake through the U.S. firm Nukem. Kyrgyzstan's Kara Balta milling facility ships low-enriched uranium to Ulba and to Russia. Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan also hosted major chemical and biological warfare (CBW) facilities during the Soviet era, raising major concerns about possible proliferation dangers posed by remaining materials and personnel.

## Illegal Narcotics Production, Use, and Trafficking

The increasing trafficking and use of illegal narcotics in Central Asia endanger the security, independence, and development of the states by stunting economic and political reforms and exacerbating crime, corruption, and health problems. As a conduit, the region receives increasing attention from criminal groups smuggling narcotics from Afghanistan, mainly to markets in Russia, although drug use within the region also is accelerating. Afghanistan has been the main producer of drugs trafficked into the region.<sup>44</sup>

According to the U.N. Office of Drugs and Crime (UNODC), drug trafficking in Central Asia appears to involve many crime groups and drugs change hands several times before delivery to Russian markets. In this sense, the trafficking is less organized than that involving Central American drug trafficking to the United States. In the case of Central Asia, some organized crime groups based in producer countries have been able to expand their influence into the region because of poorly patrolled borders, lack of cooperation among the states, lawlessness, and corruption among officials, police, and border guards. Also, ethnic Tajiks residing in northern Afghanistan can more easily smuggle drugs into Tajikistan. Problems with traditional export routes for Asian drugs have encouraged the use of Central Asia as a transshipment route. Nigerian organized crime groups reportedly transship some Pakistani heroin through Central Asia to Russian markets, and sell some in Central Asia. Even Latin American crime groups have reportedly smuggled drugs into Central Asia destined for Russia, such as cocaine from Brazil. These and other international organized crime groups are integrating smaller Central Asian crime groups into their operations.<sup>45</sup> Organized crime groups also have worked closely with Islamic terrorist groups such as the Taliban and the IMU in drug trafficking and dealing. According to some observers, the IMU has been a major smuggler of heroin through Central Asia, although U.S.-led coalition operations in Afghanistan in late 2001 at least temporarily disrupted IMU trafficking.<sup>46</sup> Some Tajik border troops along the Tajik-Afghan border allegedly gain revenues from bribes from drug smugglers from Afghanistan. In Kazakhstan, some police and security personnel reportedly vie to offer their services to drug traffickers.<sup>47</sup>

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<sup>44</sup> U.N. Office of Drugs and Crime (UNODC). Regional Office for Central Asia. *Milestones*, February 2007, pp. 10-11; UNODC. *World Drug Report 2007*, August 1, 2007, pp. 182-189.

<sup>45</sup> Irina Adinayeva, "International Drug Trafficking and Central Asia," in *Building a Common Future*, ed. by P. Stobdan, New Delhi, 1999; Justine Walker, "Beyond Terrorism: the Real Impact of Afghan Drugs Trafficking on Northern Neighbors," *Drugs and Alcohol Today*, November 2005, pp. 39-41.

<sup>46</sup> U.S. House of Representatives. Committee on the Judiciary. Subcommittee on Crime. *Testimony of Ralf Mutschke, Assistant Director, Subdirector for Crimes Against Persons and Property, Interpol*, December 13, 2000; Ahmed Rashid, *Jihad: The Rise of Militant Islam in Central Asia*. New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2002, p. 229; Svante Cornell and Niklas Swanström, "The Eurasian Drug Trade: A Challenge to Regional Security," *Problems of Post-Communism*, July/August 2006, pp. 10-27. According to analyst Jacob Townsend, the IMU is mostly involved in drug dealing, and organized crime groups are involved in trafficking. "The Logistics of Opiate Trafficking in Tajikistan, Kyrgyzstan, and Kazakhstan," *China and Eurasia Forum Quarterly*, Volume 4, No. 1, 2006, pp. 69-91.

<sup>47</sup> Martha Olcott, *Kazakhstan*, Washington, DC: Carnegie Endowment, 2002, pp. 219-220.

Counter-narcotics agencies in the Central Asian states are hampered by inadequate budgets, personnel training, and equipment, but most have registered ever greater drug seizures. According to the State Department, the Kazakh government's "DEA-like" Committee on Combating and Controlling Narcotics within the Ministry of the Interior, established in 2004, contributed to "considerable progress" by Kazakhstan in counter-narcotics efforts, including drug seizures and tightening drug trafficking penalties. Kazakh security agents reportedly discovered two new drug trafficking routes from Afghanistan through Kazakhstan to end-users in Australia and Japan. Nonetheless, Kazakhstan remains an "important transit country, especially for drugs coming out of Afghanistan." In Kyrgyzstan, a Drug Control Agency formed in 2004 was "fighting a losing battle against drug trafficking," although there were some signs in 2005 that "perhaps the tide [was] beginning to turn" in combating drugs. According to the State Department, "the city of Osh, in particular, is ... a primary transfer point for narcotics into Uzbekistan and Kazakhstan and on to markets in Russia, Western Europe, and to a minor extent, the United States." Tajikistan claimed to seize more illicit drugs in 2006 than the previous year, but the amounts smuggled also had increased.<sup>48</sup>

Turkmenistan is centrally located for smuggling opiates from Afghanistan and Iran northward and westward, but its somewhat successful efforts to control smuggling may have persuaded some smugglers to use the Tajik route instead. However, large-scale smugglers may use bribes and links to Turkmen officials to facilitate trafficking through Turkmenistan. Heroin use is widespread in smoked form, increasing the need for anti-drug education and drug treatment. In Uzbekistan, the National Center for Drug Control attempts to coordinate anti-drug efforts carried out by the police, security, and customs agencies, with mixed results. According to the State Department, drug smuggling into Uzbekistan involves families or small groups rather than national rings.<sup>49</sup>

## Implications for U.S. Interests

Since the terrorist attacks on the United States on September 11, 2001, the Administration has stated that U.S. policy toward Central Asia focuses on three inter-related activities: the promotion of security, domestic reforms, and energy development.<sup>50</sup> The September 11, 2001, attacks led the Administration to realize that "it was critical to the national interests of the United States that we greatly enhance our relations with the five Central Asian countries" to prevent them from becoming harbors for terrorism, according to former Deputy Assistant Secretary of State B. Lynn Pascoe in testimony in June 2002. According to this thinking, the instability that is characteristic of "failed states"—where central institutions of governance and security are unable to function throughout a state's territory—can make these states attractive to terrorist groups as bases to threaten U.S. interests.

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<sup>48</sup> U.S. State Department. Bureau for International Narcotics and Law Enforcement Affairs *International Narcotics Control Strategy Report—2005*, March 2006; CEDR, December 4, 2005, Doc. No. CEP-27056; December 20, 2006, Doc. No. CEP-950171.

<sup>49</sup> *International Narcotics Control Strategy Report—2005*. See also CRS Report RL32686, *Afghanistan: Narcotics and U.S. Policy*, by Christopher M. Blanchard.

<sup>50</sup> U.S. House of Representatives. Committee on International Relations. Subcommittee on the Middle East and Central Asia. Hearing: U.S. Policy in Central Asia. *Testimony by Richard A. Boucher, Assistant Secretary of State for South and Central Asian Affairs*, April 26, 2006.



Although then-U.S. Caspian emissary Elizabeth Jones (she later became Assistant Secretary of State) in April 2001 carefully elucidated that the United States would not intervene militarily to halt incursions by Islamic terrorists into Central Asia, this stance was effectively reversed after September 11, 2001. U.S.-led counter-terrorism efforts were undertaken in Afghanistan, including against terrorists harbored in Afghanistan who aimed to overthrow Central Asian governments and who were assisting the Taliban in fighting against the coalition. Added security training and equipment were provided to the Central Asian states, supplemented by more aid to promote democratization, human rights, and economic reforms, because the latter aid addressed “root causes of terrorism,” according to Jones in testimony in December 2001. She averred that “we rely on [Central Asian] governments for the security and well-being of our troops, and for vital intelligence,” and that the United States “will not abandon Central Asia” after peace is achieved in Afghanistan.

In October 2003, then-Assistant Secretary Jones in testimony stressed that “our big strategic interests [in Central Asia] are not temporary” and that the United States and its international partners have no alternative but to “be a force for change in the region.” Then-Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld similarly stressed in February 2004 that “it is Caspian security ... that is important for [the United States] and it is important to the world that security be assured in that area.”

The 2004 *Final Report* of the National Commission on Terrorist Attacks Upon the United States (The 9/11 Commission) and the President’s 2003 *National Strategy for Combating Terrorism* call for the United States to work with Central Asian and other countries to deny sponsorship, support, and sanctuary to terrorists. The *Report* and *Strategy* also call for assisting the states to democratize, respect human rights, and develop free markets to reduce underlying vulnerabilities that terrorists seek to exploit.<sup>51</sup>

Stressing the ramifications of terrorism in Central Asia to U.S. strategic interests, then-Director of National Intelligence John Negroponte testified to Congress in January 2007 that the “repression, leadership stasis, and corruption that tend to characterize [Central Asian] regimes provide fertile soil for the development of radical Islamic sentiment and movements, and raise questions about the Central Asian states’ reliability as energy and counter-terrorism partners.... In the worst, but not implausible case, central authority in one or more of these states could evaporate ... opening the door to a dramatic expansion of terrorist and criminal activity along the lines of a failed state.”<sup>52</sup> In July 2007, the Deputy Director of National Intelligence, Thomas Fingar, similarly testified to Congress that “there is no guarantee that elite and societal turmoil across Central Asia would stay within the confines of existing autocratic systems. In the worst, but not implausible case, central authority in one or more of these states could be challenged, leading to potential for increased terrorist and criminal activities.”<sup>53</sup>

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<sup>51</sup> National Commission on Terrorist Attacks Upon the United States. *Final Report*, July 23, 2004; The White House. *National Strategy for Combating Terrorism*, February 14, 2003.

<sup>52</sup> U.S. Senate. Select Committee on Intelligence. *Testimony by Director of National Intelligence John Negroponte*, January 11, 2007.

<sup>53</sup> U.S. House of Representatives. Committee on Armed Services. *Global Security Assessment: Testimony by Deputy Director of National Intelligence Thomas Fingar*, July 11, 2007.

## **Reactions to U.S.-Led Coalition Actions in Iraq**

U.S. ties to the Central Asian states appeared generally sound in the immediate wake of U.S.-led coalition operations in Iraq in March-April 2003 to eliminate state-sponsored terrorism and weapons of mass destruction. Initial responses in the region ranged from support by Uzbekistan to some expressions of concern by Kyrgyzstan and Turkmenistan. U.S. and Iraqi government efforts to contain the escalation of sectarian and insurgent violence in Iraq, however, have been criticized by some Islamic groups and others in Central Asia.<sup>54</sup>

- Uzbekistan was the only Central Asian state to join the “coalition of the willing” that supported upcoming operations in Iraq (Kazakhstan joined later). Uzbek President Islam Karimov on March 6, 2003, stated that the Iraq operation was a continuation of “efforts to break the back of terrorism.” On May 8, his National Security Council endorsed sending medical and other humanitarian and rebuilding aid to Iraq, but on August 30, Karimov indicated that plans to send medics to Iraq had been dropped. He has argued for greater U.S. attention to terrorist actions in Afghanistan that threaten stability in Central Asia.
- The Kazakh foreign minister on March 28, 2003, voiced general support for disarming Iraq but not for military action. However, on April 24 Kazakh President Nursultan Nazarbayev stated that Saddam’s removal in Iraq enhanced Central Asian and world security. Reportedly after a U.S. appeal, Nazarbayev proposed and the legislature in late May approved sending military personnel to Iraq. Twenty-seven Kazakh combat engineers arrived in Iraq in late August 2003 and have served with Polish and Ukrainian units.
- Tajik President Emomaliy Rakhmanov reportedly on March 13, 2003, refused Russia’s request to denounce coalition actions in Iraq. Tajik political analyst Suhrob Sharipov stated on April 3 that Tajikistan was neutral regarding U.S.-led coalition actions in Iraq because Tajikistan had benefitted from U.S. aid to rebuild the country and from the improved security climate following U.S.-led actions against terrorism in Afghanistan.
- The Kyrgyz foreign minister on March 20, 2003, expressed “deep regret” that diplomacy had failed to resolve the Iraq dispute, raised concerns that an Iraq conflict could destabilize Central Asia, and proclaimed that the Ganci airbase could not be used for Iraq operations. During a June 2003 U.S. visit, however, he reportedly told Vice President Cheney that Kyrgyzstan was ready to send peacekeepers to Iraq (and Afghanistan). The Kyrgyz defense minister in April 2004 announced that Kyrgyzstan would not send troops to Iraq, because of the increased violence there.
- Turkmenistan’s late President Saparmurad Niyazov on March 12, 2003, stated that he was against military action in Iraq and, on April 11, called for the U.N. to head up the creation of a democratic Iraq and for aid for ethnic Turkmen in Iraq displaced by the fighting.

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<sup>54</sup> CEDR, January 1, 2007, Doc. No. CEP-950051; January 6, 2007, Doc. No. CEP-950089; December 29, 2006, Doc. No CEP-950214.

## Designations of Terrorist Organizations

The U.S. government has moved to classify various groups in the region as terrorist organizations, making them subject to various sanctions. In September 2000, the State Department designated the IMU, led by Yuldash, as a Foreign Terrorist Organization, stating that the IMU resorts to terrorism, actively threatens U.S. interests, and attacks American citizens. The “main goal of the IMU is to topple the current government in Uzbekistan,” it warned, linking the IMU to bombings and attacks on Uzbekistan in 1999-2000. The IMU is being aided by Afghanistan’s Taliban and by terrorist bin Laden, according to the State Department, and it stressed that the “United States supports the right of Uzbekistan to defend its sovereignty and territorial integrity from the violent actions of the IMU.” At the same time, the United States has stressed that efforts to combat terrorism cannot include widespread human rights violations. The designation made it illegal for U.S. entities to provide funds or resources to the IMU; made it possible to deport IMU representatives from, or to forbid their admission to, the United States; and permitted the seizure of its U.S. assets. It also permitted the United States to increase intelligence sharing and other security assistance to Uzbekistan.

On September 20, 2001, President Bush in his address to a Joint Session of Congress stressed that the IMU was linked to Al Qaeda and demanded that the Taliban hand over all such terrorists, or they would be targeted by U.S.-led military forces. According to most observers, the President was stressing that Uzbekistan should actively support the United States in the Afghan operation.

Among other terrorist groups, CIA Director Porter Goss testified to the Senate Armed Services Committee on March 17, 2005, that the IJG “has become a more virulent threat to U.S. interests and local governments.” On May 25, 2005, the State Department designated IJG as a global terrorist group, and on June 1, 2005, the U.N. Security Council added IJG to its terrorism list. Officials in Germany arrested several individuals on September 5, 2007, on charges of planning explosions at the U.S. airbase at Ramstein, at U.S. and Uzbek diplomatic offices, and other targets in Germany. The IJG claimed responsibility and stated that it was targeting U.S. and Uzbek interests because of these countries’ “brutal policies towards Muslims,” and targeting Germany because it has a small military base in Termez, Uzbekistan, which is used to support NATO operations in Afghanistan. Reportedly, the suspects had received training at IMU and al Qaeda terrorist training camps in Pakistan. In U.S. Congressional testimony on September 10, 2007, John Redd, the director of the National Counterterrorism Center, and Mike McConnell, the Director of National Intelligence, stated that U.S. communications intercepts shared with Germany had facilitated foiling the plot.

In August 2002, the United States announced that it was freezing any U.S. assets of the East Turkestan Islamic Movement (ETIM), a Uighur group operating in Central Asia, since the group had committed numerous terrorist acts in China and elsewhere and posed a threat to Americans and U.S. interests. In September 2002, the United States, China, and other nations asked the U.N. to add ETIM to its terrorism list. China reported that its military exercises with Kyrgyzstan in November 2002 were aimed at helping Kyrgyzstan to eliminate the group.

On the other hand, the United States has not yet classified Hizb ut-Tahrir (HT) as a terrorist group. According to the State Department’s *Country Reports on Terrorism 2006*, “radical extremist groups such as HT may also present a danger to the region. HT [is] an extremist political movement advocating the establishment of a borderless, theocratic Islamic state throughout the entire Muslim world.... The United States has no evidence that HT has committed any acts of international terrorism, but the group’s radical anti-American and anti-Semitic

ideology is sympathetic to acts of violence against the United States and its allies. HT has publicly called on Muslims to travel to Iraq and Afghanistan to fight Coalition Forces.”<sup>55</sup> U.S. officials have criticized Central Asian governments for imprisoning HT members who are not proven to be actively engaged in terrorist activities, and for imprisoning other political and religious dissidents under false accusations that they are HT members. According to a November 2002 State Department factsheet, HT has not advocated the violent overthrow of Central Asian governments, so the United States has not designated it a Foreign Terrorist Organization.

The State Department has urged the Central Asian governments to “prosecute their citizens for illegal acts, not for their beliefs.” Reflecting concerns about violence by HT, however, German authorities in January 2003 outlawed HT activities in Germany, declaring that it was a terrorist organization that advocates violence against Israel and Jews.<sup>56</sup>

## **U.S. Security Assistance**

Besides humanitarian and reform aid, the Administration bolstered its U.S. security assistance to Central Asia after September 11, 2001. Such aid amounted to \$994 million in cumulative budgeted funds through FY2005, of which the largest quantity went to Kazakhstan for Comprehensive Threat Reduction (CTR) programs (see **Table A-1** and **Table A-2**, below). U.S. security assistance to the region has declined somewhat in absolute terms after FY2002, but in percentage terms has become an increasingly prominent aid sector. Budgeted security and law enforcement aid to Central Asia was \$187.6 million in FY2002 (all programs and agencies), which was 32% of all aid to the region. Budgeted security and law enforcement assistance declined to \$72.96 million in FY2007 (budget estimate, all programs and agencies), but the percentage increased to 41% of all aid to the region.

U.S. foreign operations appropriations (Function 150 aid, which excludes Defense and Energy Department and food aid) requested for FY2008 for security assistance programs increased for Tajikistan and Uzbekistan, and decreased for the other three regional states. The total security assistance requested for the region was \$35 million, which represented 32% of all Function 150 assistance for Central Asia. The largest increased request was for Tajikistan, from \$6.853 million in FY2006 to a requested \$14.94 million in FY2008. A large part of the boosted aid was requested for training and equipment for border guards to enhance their counter-terrorism and counter-proliferation capabilities.

## **Nonproliferation**

After the breakup of the Soviet Union, U.S. fears of nuclear proliferation were focused on nuclear-armed Kazakhstan, and it has received the bulk of regional CTR and Department of Energy (DOE) aid for de-nuclearization, enhancing the “chain of custody,” and demilitarization. Some CTR and DOE aid also has gone to Uzbekistan. Prominent activities in Uzbekistan include the transfer of eleven kilograms of enriched uranium fuel, including highly enriched uranium, to Russia in September 2004 with U.S. assistance. Material physical protection aid provided to Kazakhstan’s Ulba Metallurgical Plant includes alarms, computers for inventory control, and

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<sup>55</sup> U.S. Department of State. *Country Reports on Terrorism 2006*, April 2007, p. 114. According to Rashid, the U.S. government debated the status of HT in 2000 but declined to classify it as a terrorist group. *Jihad*, pp. 132-135.

<sup>56</sup> *Washington Post*, December 27, 2004, p. A4.

hardening of doors.<sup>57</sup> Aid was provided to help decommission and secure Kazakhstan's Aktau reactor.

Agreements were signed at the November 1997 meeting of the U.S.-Kazakh Joint Commission to study how to safely and securely store over 300 metric tons of highly-enriched uranium and plutonium spent fuel from the Aktau reactor, some of which had become inundated by the rising Caspian Sea and was highly vulnerable to theft. Enhanced aid for export controls and customs and border security for Kazakhstan following reports of conventional arms smuggling, including a 1999 attempted shipment of Soviet-era Migs to North Korea.<sup>58</sup> Kazakhstan has received CTR funds for dismantling equipment and for environmental monitoring at several Soviet-era chemical and biological warfare (CBW) facilities.

At the U.S.-Uzbek Joint Commission meeting in May 1999, the two sides signed a CTR Implementation Agreement on securing, dismantling, and de-contaminating the Soviet-era Nukus chemical research facility. Other aid helped keep Uzbek weapons scientists employed in peaceful research. On June 5, 2001, then-Secretary of State Powell signed his first international agreement, extending new CTR assistance to Uzbekistan. The United States assisted in cleaning up a Soviet-era CBW testing site and dump on an island in the Aral Sea belonging to Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan, where Western media in June 1999 had reported the alarming discovery of live anthrax spores.<sup>59</sup>

The National Defense Authorization Act for FY2003 (P.L. 107-314, Sec. 1306) provided for the president to waive prohibitions on CTR aid (as contained in Sec. 1203 of P.L. 103-160) to a state of the former Soviet Union if he certified that the waiver was necessary for national security and submitted a report outlining why the waiver was necessary and how he planned to promote future compliance with the restrictions on CTR aid.<sup>60</sup> Although Russian arms control compliance appeared to be the main reason for the restrictions, on December 30, 2003 (for FY2004), and on December 14, 2004 (for FY2005), the President explained that Uzbekistan's human rights problems necessitated a waiver. The waiver authority under this act, exercisable each fiscal year, expired at the end of FY2005, but the National Defense Authorization Act for FY2006 (P.L. 109-163; Sec. 1303) amended the language to eliminate an expiration date for the exercise of yearly waivers. In the 110<sup>th</sup> Congress, Senator Sam Nunn introduced S. 198 on January 8, 2007, to amend P.L. 103-160 to eliminate the restrictions on CTR aid, including respect for human rights. Although waivers can be and are exercised when the conditions are not met, he stated, the lengthy process of making determinations and exercising waivers threatens the primary U.S. national security goal of combating WMD.<sup>61</sup> Language similar to S. 198 was included in H.R. 1,

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<sup>57</sup> Previous U.S. assistance has included removing about 600 kilograms of highly enriched uranium from an inadequately safeguarded warehouse in Kazakhstan, and shipping it to the United States (the operation was codenamed "Project Sapphire"). In 1995, the U.S. Defense Department assisted Kazakhstan in sealing tunnels at the Semipalitinsk former nuclear test site, to secure nuclear wastes.

<sup>58</sup> *CEDR*, February 17, 2001, Doc. No. CEP-120.

<sup>59</sup> Gulbarshyn Bozheyeva, Yerlan Kunakbayev, and Dastan Yeleuke, *Former Soviet Biological Weapons Facilities in Kazakhstan*, Center for Non-Proliferation Studies, Monterey Institute of International Studies, June 1999; *CEDR*, November 20, 2002, Doc. No. CEP-139.

<sup>60</sup> The six restrictions in P.L. 103-160 call for CTR recipients to be committed to dismantling WMD if they have so pledged, foregoing excessive military buildups, eschewing re-use in new nuclear weapons of components of destroyed weapons, facilitating verification of weapons destruction, complying with arms control agreements, and observing internationally recognized human rights.

<sup>61</sup> *Congressional Record*, January 8, 2007, pp. S237-S238.

Implementing the 9/11 Commission Recommendations Act of 2007, signed into law on August 3, 2007 (P.L. 110-53).

## **Counter-Narcotics Aid**

According to the State Department and U.S. Drug Enforcement Agency (DEA), drugs produced in or transiting Central Asia have not yet reached the United States in major quantities. However, there is rising U.S. concern, since Latin American and other international organized groups have become involved in the Central Asian drug trade, and European governments have begun to focus on combating drug trafficking through this new route. U.S. policy also emphasizes the threat of rising terrorism, crime, corruption, and instability posed by illegal narcotics production, use, and trafficking in Central Asia. The FBI, DEA, and Customs have given training in counter-narcotics to police, customs, and border control personnel in Central Asia as part of the Anti-Crime Training and Technical Assistance Program sponsored by the State Department's Bureau of International Narcotics and Law Enforcement Affairs. Some Central Asian drug officials also have received training at the International Law Enforcement Academy in Budapest and by the U.S. Coast Guard. Other U.S. aid is provided through the U.N. Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC).<sup>62</sup>

Since the bulk of opiates enter Central Asia from Afghanistan, where they are produced, U.S. assistance for drug control efforts in Afghanistan can have an effect on trafficking in Central Asia. Among programs undertaken in Central Asia, an agreement went into force with Kazakhstan in 2003 to provide counter-narcotics training and equipment for police and border guards. In 2004, the State Department sponsored two British Customs agents who provided training on drug profiling and search techniques to police and border guards. The State Department also provided equipment to the National Forensics Laboratory and the Statistics Committee of the Prosecutor's Office, which targets drug trafficking organizations, and provided training to nearly 700 personnel of the Prosecutor's Office on investigative techniques.

With U.S. assistance, Kyrgyzstan in 2004 set up a Drug Control Agency, and the United States and UNODC have provided guidance for hiring police and staff. In Tajikistan, DEA plans to open an office in Dushanbe in 2007. In Uzbekistan, U.S. assistance was provided under the aegis of a 2001 U.S.-Uzbek Agreement on Narcotics Control and Law Enforcement Assistance. Training was provided to facilitate investigating and prosecuting narcotics trafficking cases. The DEA sponsored a Sensitive Investigative Unit (SIU) that was set up in the Interior Ministry. The SIU conducted several undercover and international operations and contributed to dramatic increases in drug seizures. In FY2004-FY2005, the Defense Department provided some counter-narcotics training and equipment, including two patrol boats delivered to border guards on the Afghan border. A Resident U.S. Legal Advisor helped Uzbekistan draft counter-drug legislation. No U.S. assistance for counter-narcotics was provided to Uzbekistan in FY2006, according to the State Department, but the Administration has requested some drug demand reduction assistance for Uzbekistan for FY2008.

To help counter burgeoning drug trafficking from Afghanistan, the emergency supplemental for FY2005 (P.L. 109-13) provided \$242 million for Central Asia and Afghanistan. The emergency supplemental for FY2006 (P.L. 109-234) provided \$150 million for Central Asia and Afghanistan

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<sup>62</sup> U.S. State Department. *International Narcotics Control Strategy Report*, March 1, 2007; U.S. Department of State. *U.S. Government Assistance to and Cooperative Activities with Eurasia, FY2005 Annual Report*, March 7, 2006.

(of which about \$30 million was recommended for Central Asia). The FY2008 baseline and supplemental request for the Defense Department called for about \$44.8 million in counter-narcotics aid for Central Asia.

## **Military Cooperation**

The United States and the Central Asian states signed defense cooperation accords prior to September 11, 2001, that provided frameworks for aid and joint staff and working group contacts and facilitated enhanced cooperation after September 11, 2001. According to the 9/11 Commission, such pre-September 11, 2001, ties included Uzbek permission for U.S. clandestine efforts against Al Qaeda in Afghanistan.<sup>63</sup> According to Assistant Secretary of Defense Crouch in testimony in June 2002, “our military relationships with each [Central Asian] nation have matured on a scale not imaginable prior to September 11<sup>th</sup>.” Kyrgyzstan, he relates, is a “critical regional partner” in Operation Enduring Freedom (OEF; military actions in Afghanistan), providing basing for combat and combat support units at Manas Airport (at the U.S.-designated Ganci airbase) for U.S. and other coalition forces.

Uzbekistan provided a base for U.S. operations at Karshi-Khanabad and a base for German units at Termez, and a land corridor to Afghanistan for humanitarian aid via the Friendship Bridge at Termez. It also leased to the coalition IL-76 transport airlift for forces and equipment. Kazakhstan provided overflight rights and expedited rail transshipment of supplies. Turkmenistan permitted blanket overflight and refueling privileges for humanitarian flights in support of OEF. Tajikistan permitted use of its international airport in Dushanbe for U.S., British, and French refueling and basing. While the Administration has rejected the idea of permanent military bases in these states, Crouch stated in June 2002 that “for the foreseeable future, U.S. defense and security cooperation in Central Asia must continue to support actions to deter or defeat terrorist threats” and to build effective armed forces under civilian control.

According to a late November 2002 State Department fact sheet, the United States does not intend to establish permanent military bases in Central Asia but does seek long-term security ties and access to military facilities in the region for the foreseeable future to deter or defeat terrorist threats. The fact sheet also emphasizes that the U.S. military presence in the region likely will remain as long as operations continue in Afghanistan. In mid-2004, tents at the Ganci airbase reportedly were being replaced with metal buildings. U.S. officers allegedly denied that the buildings were permanent but averred that there was no end yet in sight for operations in Afghanistan.

The Overseas Basing Commission (OBC), in its May 2005 Report, concurred with the Administration that existing bases in Kyrgyzstan and Uzbekistan had been useful for supporting OEF. The OBC considered that there could be some possible merit in establishing cooperative security locations in the region but urged Congress to seek further inter-agency vetting of “what constitutes vital U.S. interests in the area that would require [a] long-term U.S. presence.”<sup>64</sup>

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<sup>63</sup> National Commission on Terrorist Attacks Upon the United States (The 9/11 Commission). *Final Report*, July 23, 2004, p. 197.

<sup>64</sup> Commission on Review of the Overseas Military Facility Structure of the United States. *Interim Report*, May 9, 2005.

Prior to September 11, 2001, the United States fostered military-to-military cooperation through NATO's PFP, which all the Central Asian states except Tajikistan had joined by mid-1994. With encouragement from the U.S. Central Command (USCENTCOM), Tajikistan indicated in mid-2001 that it would join PFP, and it signed accords on admission in February 2002. At the signing, a NATO press release hailed Tajikistan's support to the coalition as "of key importance" to combating international terrorism. Central Asian officers and troops have participated in PFP exercises in the United States since 1995, and U.S. troops have participated in exercises in Central Asia since 1997. Many in Central Asia viewed these exercises as "sending a message" to Islamic extremists and others in Afghanistan, Iran, and elsewhere against fostering regional instability. Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan appeared to vie to gain services from NATO.

U.S. security accords were concluded with several Central Asian states after September 11, 2001. These include a U.S.-Uzbekistan Declaration on the Strategic Partnership signed on March 12, 2002, that included a nonspecific security guarantee. The United States affirmed that "it would regard with grave concern any external threat" to Uzbekistan's security and would consult with Uzbekistan "on an urgent basis" regarding a response. The two states pledged to intensify military cooperation, including "re-equipping the Armed Forces" of Uzbekistan. Similarly, visiting Kyrgyz President Askar Akayev and President Bush issued a joint statement on September 23, 2002, pledging to deepen the strategic partnership, including cooperation in counter-terrorism, and the United States highlighted its aid for Kyrgyzstan's border security and military capabilities.

All the states except Tajikistan became eligible in FY1997 to receive non-lethal defense articles and services (Presidential Determination No. 97-19), including FMF grants through the PFP program. Tajikistan became eligible in FY2002 (Presidential Determination No. 2002-15). FMF aid supports military interoperability with NATO and participation in PFP exercises, and has included communications equipment, computers, medical items, and English language and NCO training. In February 2000, the United States transferred sixteen military transport vehicles to the Uzbek military to enhance interoperability with NATO forces, the first sizeable military equipment to be provided under the FMF program to Central Asia.

The principal components of foreign military assistance to Central Asia are Foreign Military Financing (FMF), International Military Education and Training (IMET), the Regional Defense Counter-Terrorism Fellowship Program (CTFP), the Regional Centers for Security Studies (RCSS), and transfers of Excess Defense Articles (EDA). The states received about \$6.9 million in FMF aid in FY2001, which was boosted after September 11, 2001, to \$55.7 million in FY2002 (over \$36 million of which went to Uzbekistan). FMF aid dropped to \$16.1 million in FY2003 and continued to decline. The Administration requested \$4.2 million in FMF for FY2008. Some of this reduction since FY2004 is due to conditions placed on assistance to Uzbekistan (see below). For FY2006, the conferees on H.R. 3057 (P.L. 109-102; Foreign Operations Appropriations; H.Rept. 109-265) directed that no FMF funds be provided to Uzbekistan. The states also are eligible to receive Excess Defense Articles (EDA) on a grant basis, to enhance interoperability with NATO (P.L. 109-102 directs that EDA are to be included in aid to Uzbekistan subject to conditionality).

The IMET program supports PFP by providing English language training to military officers and exposure to democratic civil-military relations and respect for human rights. The CTFP, a Defense Department program, complements IMET but focuses on special operations training for officers. Central Asian officers also receive training at the Marshall European Center for Security Studies in Germany to enhance security, foster bilateral and multilateral partnerships, improve



defense-related decision-making, and strengthen cooperation, according to the Defense Department. The State and Defense Departments reported that 784 personnel from Central Asia received IMET, CTFP, RCSS, or other training in FY2004 and 1,118 personnel in FY2005. For IMET, funding for Central Asia increased in FY2006, and the Administration has requested an increase for Central Asia for FY2008, indicating the continuing importance the Administration attaches to this program.<sup>65</sup>

USCENTCOM in 1999 became responsible for U.S. military engagement activities, planning, and operations in Central Asia (the region was previously under the aegis of European Command). It states that its peacetime strategy focuses on PFP, RCSS, and IMET programs to promote ties between the regional military forces and U.S. and NATO forces, and to foster “apolitical, professional militaries capable of responding to regional peacekeeping and humanitarian needs” in the region. USCENTCOM Commanders visited the region regularly, setting the stage for more extensive military ties post-September 11, 2001. Besides these continuing visits by USCENTCOM Commanders, other U.S. military officials, including former Defense Secretary Rumsfeld, regularly have toured the region.

A U.S.-Uzbek Status of Forces Agreement (SOFA) was signed on October 7, 2001, and the air campaign against Afghanistan began an hour later.<sup>66</sup> The SOFA provided for use of Uzbek airspace and for up to 1,500 U.S. troops to use a Soviet-era airbase (termed Karshi-Khanabad or K2) 90 miles north of the Afghan border near the towns of Karshi and Khanabad. In exchange, the United States provided security guarantees and agreed that terrorists belonging to the Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan (IMU) who were fighting alongside Taliban and Al Qaeda forces would be targeted. According to some reports, the problems in negotiating the U.S.-Uzbek SOFA further spurred the United States to seek airfield access at the Manas International Airport in Kyrgyzstan, which in early 2002 became the primary hub for operations in Afghanistan.<sup>67</sup> U.S. military engineers upgraded runways at the Manas airfield and built an encampment next to the airport, naming it the Peter J. Ganci airbase, in honor of a U.S. fireman killed in New York on September 11, 2001.

Besides these airbases, Uzbekistan also has provided a base for about 300 German troops at Termez and a land corridor to Afghanistan for humanitarian aid via the Friendship Bridge at Termez. Over 100 French troops have used the Dushanbe airport in Tajikistan for refueling and humanitarian shipments. Kazakhstan has allowed overflight and transshipment rights, and U.S.-Kazakh accords were signed in 2002 on the emergency use of Kazakhstan's Almaty airport and on military-to-military relations. Turkmenistan, which has sought to remain neutral, allowed the use of its bases for refueling and humanitarian trans-shipments. Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, and Uzbekistan have sent several military liaison officers to USCENTCOM.

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<sup>65</sup> U.S. Departments of Defense and State. *Foreign Military Training: Joint Report to Congress, FY2005-FY2006*, September 2006; *Foreign Military Training: Joint Report to Congress, FY2004-FY2005*, April 2005.

<sup>66</sup> The State Department. *Fact Sheet*, November 27, 2002; *Supporting Air and Space Expeditionary Forces*, RAND, 2005. Some classified US-Uzbek cooperation against the Taliban and Al Qaeda had been carried out before September 11, 2001.

<sup>67</sup> Deborah E. Klepp. *The U.S. Needs a Base Where? How the U.S. Established an Air Base in the Kyrgyz Republic*, National Defense University, 2004. Perhaps in contrast to the more visible air operations, Uzbekistan more readily accommodated less visible special operations. See Senate Armed Services Committee. Subcommittee on Emerging Threats. *Statement by General Charles R. Holland, Commander, Special Operations Command*, March 12, 2002.

In Congress, Omnibus Appropriations for FY2003 (P.L. 108-7; signed into law on February 20, 2003) forbade FREEDOM Support Act assistance to the government of Uzbekistan unless the Secretary of State determined and reported that Uzbekistan was making substantial progress in meeting its commitments to democratize and respect human rights. P.L. 108-7 also forbade assistance to the government of Kazakhstan unless the Secretary of State determined and reported that it significantly had improved its human rights record during the preceding six months. Unlike the case with Uzbekistan, the legislation permitted the Secretary to waive the requirement on national security grounds. The Secretary reported in May 2003 that Uzbekistan was making such progress and in July 2003 that Kazakhstan was making progress, eliciting some criticism of these findings from Congress.

These conditions were retained in Consolidated Appropriations for FY2004, including foreign operations (P.L. 108-199), while clarifying that the prohibition covered assistance to the *central* government of Uzbekistan and specifying that conditions included respecting human rights, establishing a “genuine” multi-party system, and ensuring free and fair elections and freedom of expression and media. Consolidated Appropriations for FY2005, including Foreign Operations (P.L. 108-447, Section 578) and Foreign Operations Appropriations for FY2006 (P.L. 109-102) retained the conditions on assistance to Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan.

On July 13, 2004, State Department spokesman Richard Boucher announced that, despite some “encouraging progress” in respecting human rights, up to \$18 million in military and economic aid would be withheld because of “lack of progress on democratic reform and restrictions put on U.S. assistance partners on the ground.” Some affected programs were retained through use of “notwithstanding” authority (after consultation with Congress) and some aid was reprogrammed, so about \$7 million was actually cut. IMET and FMF programs, which are conditioned on respect for human rights, reportedly were among those affected. The then-Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, Gen. Richard Myers, during a visit to Uzbekistan in August 2004, criticized the cutoff of programs as “shortsighted” and not “productive,” since it reduced U.S. military influence. Reportedly, he stated that Defense Department nonproliferation aid would amount to \$21 million in FY2004 and pointed out that fourteen patrol boats worth \$2.9 million were being transferred, perhaps to reassure the Uzbeks of U.S. interest in their security.<sup>68</sup>

For FY2005, Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice reported to Congress in May 2005 that Kazakhstan had failed to significantly improve its human rights record, but that she had waived aid restrictions on national security grounds. The Secretary of State in FY2005 did not determine and report to Congress that Uzbekistan was making significant progress in respecting human rights, so Section 578 aid restrictions remained in place.<sup>69</sup> The State Department reported that it used notwithstanding authority to allocate \$4.16 million in aid to Uzbekistan for reforming health care, promoting better treatment of detainees, combating HIV/AIDS, combating trafficking in drugs and persons, and supporting World Trade Organization accession.

For FY2006, Secretary of State Rice reported to Congress in May 2006 that Kazakhstan had failed to significantly improve its human rights record, but that she had waived aid restrictions on

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<sup>68</sup> According to *Foreign Military Training: Joint Report to Congress, FY2004-FY2005*, 99 Uzbek officers received training through the IMET program in FY2004. The report also lists a FY2004 FMF training “activity” for the Uzbek armed forces funded at \$288,700.

<sup>69</sup> According to *Foreign Military Training: Joint Report to Congress, FY2005-FY2006*, FMF funding was used in Uzbekistan in FY2005 to train 112 students in non-commissioned officer leadership. No funding for IMET is reported in FY2005.

national security grounds. She did not determine and report to Congress that Uzbekistan was making significant progress in respecting human rights, so Section 586 restrictions remained in place. According to the State Department, notwithstanding authority was used to allocate some of the aid.

Operating under the direction of the continuing resolution (P.L. 109-289, as amended), the Secretary of State reported to Congress in April 2007 that Kazakhstan had failed to significantly improve its human rights record but that it had waived aid restrictions on national security grounds. It did not determine and report to Congress that Uzbekistan was making significant progress in respecting human rights, so Section 586 restrictions remained in place (IMET and FMF programs were among the affected programs that did not receive funding).

## **Closure of Karshi-Khanabad**

On July 5, 2005, the presidents of Uzbekistan, Kyrgyzstan, and Tajikistan signed a declaration at an SCO summit that stated that “as large-scale military operations against terrorism have come to an end in Afghanistan, the SCO member states maintain that the relevant parties to the anti-terrorist coalition should set a deadline for the temporary use of ... infrastructure facilities of the SCO member states and for their military presence in these countries.”<sup>70</sup> Despite this declaration, none of the Central Asian leaders immediately called for closing the coalition bases. However, after the United States and others interceded so that refugees who fled from Andijon to Kyrgyzstan could fly to Romania, Uzbekistan on July 29 demanded that the United States vacate K2 within six months. On November 21, 2005, the United States officially ceased operations to support Afghanistan at K2. Perhaps indicative of the reversal of U.S. military-to-military and other ties, former pro-U.S. defense minister Qodir Gulomov was convicted of treason and received seven years in prison, later suspended. Many K2 activities shifted to the Manas airbase in Kyrgyzstan.<sup>71</sup> In early 2006, Kyrgyz President Bakiyev reportedly requested that lease payments for use of the Manas airbase be increased to more than \$200 million per year and at the same time re-affirmed Russia’s free use of its nearby base.<sup>72</sup>

Russia’s President Vladimir Putin in June 2006 unfavorably compared U.S. foreign policy to Russia’s policy toward the other Soviet successor states (particularly toward Uzbekistan). He stated that Russia had “careful” relations with them since they were still “weak and vulnerable” instead of trying to “impose standards” on them. He argued that “I understand the dissatisfaction of the United States with the fact that Uzbekistan has closed [K2]. But if they didn’t behave there like a bull in a china shop, maybe the base would not have been closed.” Outgoing U.S. Ambassador to Tajikistan Richard Hoagland strongly responded that “to assume that these nations are subject to orders from ... Europe or North America ... is embarrassingly simplistic, offensively paternalistic, and ... does not correspond to reality. To call these republics fragile is equally paternalistic.... Some clear-eyed leaders in [Central Asia] desire strongly to build their nation’s independence and sovereignty. Some others are willing to sell their state and even their own soul to the highest bidder for their own and their family’s short-term personal and political gain.... It

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<sup>70</sup> CEDR, July 5, 2005, Doc. No. CPP-249.

<sup>71</sup> According to a mid-2006 report, nine million pounds of fuel were being off-loaded and 4,000 tons of cargo and 13,500 people were being transported each month through Manas to Afghanistan. USAFE/CC Revisits Manas, Impressed with Improvements, *US Fed News*, July 10, 2006.

<sup>72</sup> For background, see CRS Report RS22295, *Uzbekistan’s Closure of the Airbase at Karshi-Khanabad: Context and Implications*, by Jim Nichol.

would most definitely not be to [the advantage of Central Asian states] to become the Junior Partners in a new Warsaw Pact or Tashkent Pact.... We have no intention to create a new bloc to exercise control.... [All countries] need to work to integrate Central Asia into the world community.”<sup>73</sup>

Some observers viewed the closure of K2 and souring U.S.-Uzbek relations as setbacks to U.S. influence in the region and as gains for Russian and Chinese influence. Others suggested that U.S. ties with other regional states provided continuing influence and that U.S. criticism of human rights abuses might pay future dividends among regional populations.<sup>74</sup>

On July 14, 2006, the United States and Kyrgyzstan issued a joint statement that the two sides had resolved the issue of the continued U.S. use of airbase facilities at Manas. Although not specifically mentioning U.S. basing payments, it was announced that the United States would provide \$150 million in “total assistance and compensation over the next year,” subject to congressional approval (some reports indicated that the “rent” portion of this amount would be \$17-\$20 million). Kyrgyz Security Council Secretary Miroslav Niyazov and U.S. Deputy Assistant Defense Secretary James MacDougall also signed a Protocol of Intentions affirming that the United States would compensate the Kyrgyz government and businesses for goods, services, and support of coalition operations. Some observers suggested that increased terrorist activities in Afghanistan and a May 2006 terrorist incursion from Tajikistan into Kyrgyzstan may have contributed to a Kyrgyz evaluation that the U.S. coalition presence was still necessary. Visiting Central Asia in late July 2006, USCENTCOM’s then-head Gen. John Abizaid stated that the United States probably would eventually reduce its military presence in the region while increasing its military-to-military cooperation.<sup>75</sup>

Following the shooting death of a civilian by a U.S. serviceman at the U.S.-leased Ganci airbase in Kyrgyzstan on December 6, 2006, President Kurmanbek Bakiyev the next day reportedly ordered his foreign ministry to re-examine provisions of a late 2001 status of forces agreement precluding U.S. soldiers serving in Kyrgyzstan from prosecution in local courts. Kyrgyzstan has demanded that the soldier not leave Kyrgyzstan until the completion of its investigation. In late March 2007, the chairman of the Defense Committee of the legislature called for the closure of the Ganci airbase, but President Bakiyev in early April 2007 argued that the airbase benefitted Kyrgyzstan.<sup>76</sup>

## **Safety of U.S. Citizens and Investments**

The U.S. State Department advises U.S. citizens and firms that there are dangers of terrorism in the region, including from ETIM, IMU, and Al Qaeda. Groups such as Hizb ut Tahrir (HT) also foment anti-Americanism. The Peace Corps pulled personnel out of Kyrgyzstan, Turkmenistan, and Uzbekistan after September 11, 2001, but in a policy aimed at fostering pro-U.S. views among Islamic peoples, personnel were re-deployed by mid-2002 (Uzbekistan declined Peace

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<sup>73</sup> “Putin Supports Uzbek President to Avoid Afghan Scenario,” *Interfax*, June 16, 2006; U.S. Embassy, Dushanbe, Tajikistan. Richard E. Hoagland. *Sovereign States Make Their Own Decisions*, June 19, 2006.

<sup>74</sup> On growing Chinese regional influence, see Michael Mihalka, “Counter-Insurgency, Counter-Terrorism, State-Building and Security Cooperation in Central Asia,” *China and Eurasia Forum Quarterly*, May 2006.

<sup>75</sup> *Associated Press*, July 24, 2006.

<sup>76</sup> *CEDR*, March 23, 2007, Doc. No. CEP-950167; April 7, 2007, Doc. No. CEP-950139.

Corps services in 2005). U.S. military personnel in the region mostly stay on base, and travel in groups off base to maximize their safety.

In the wake of the November 2002 coup attempt in Turkmenistan, the State Department advised U.S. citizens to carefully consider travel to Turkmenistan because of the heightened security tensions. One U.S. citizen was held for several weeks in connection with the coup attempt. Uzbekistan had no known incidents of damage to Western firms or politically-motivated violence against U.S. personnel until the bombing of the U.S. embassy in July 2004. The risks of political violence and kidnapping are high in Tajikistan, and the State Department advises U.S. citizens to avoid travel to areas near the Afghan and Kyrgyz borders and in the Karategin Valley and Tavildara region. In June 2001, members of an international humanitarian group that included one U.S. citizen were taken hostage in Tajikistan, but were soon released. Kazakhstan, though viewed as low risk for political violence, including insurrections, has had economic protests that potentially could involve Western firms. Some observers have suggested that U.S. policies regarded with disfavor by many Muslims in the region, such as the 2003 invasion of Iraq, and subsequent problems in Iraq, could harm the U.S. image and perhaps increase dangers to the safety of U.S. citizens and property.

Among reported plots against U.S. military targets, an Uzbek court in November 2004 sentenced sixteen people to 12-17 years in prison for planning to bomb the U.S. coalition airbase at Karshi-Khanabad. Kyrgyz officials announced in November 2003 that individuals trained in Afghanistan and Pakistan had been arrested for planning to bomb the U.S. Ganci airbase.<sup>77</sup> Kyrgyz media reported in July 2004 that the outgoing U.S. Ganci base commander thanked Kyrgyz authorities for helping to thwart three planned terrorist attacks on the base.

In all the Central Asian states, widespread corruption is an obstacle to U.S. firms seeking to invest. In Kazakhstan and Turkmenistan, U.S. firms have reported that corruption is pervasive throughout the central and regional governments and most sectors of the economy, and is an obstacle to U.S. investment. Corruption allegedly is rampant in the Uzbek government, with bureaucrats seeking bribes as business “consultants.” Some officials have been prosecuted for corruption. In Tajikistan, there is little effort to combat corruption and anti-corruption laws are inadequate. In terms of crime, the State Department warns that Western investment property and personnel are not safe in Tajikistan, and that crime rates are increasing in all the states (though rates are lower than in many other countries).<sup>78</sup>

## **Embassy Security**

Immediately after September 11, 2001, U.S. embassies in the region were placed on heightened alert because of the danger of terrorism. They have remained on alert because of the ongoing threat of terrorism in the region. The IMU explained that the suicide bombing of the U.S. embassy in Tashkent, Uzbekistan, in July 2004 was motivated by U.S. support for Karimov and U.S. opposition to Islam. No embassy personnel were injured. Embassy personnel also may have faced greater danger to their personal safety after Uzbek officials accused the embassy of orchestrating and financing the May 2005 uprising in Andijon. Since late 2002, the U.S. Embassy in Kyrgyzstan has restricted official travel to areas south and west of Osh because of the threat of

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<sup>77</sup> CEDR, November 6, 2003, Doc. No. CEP-185; April 22, 2004, Doc. No. CEP-77; and July 7, 2004, Doc. No. CEP-164.

<sup>78</sup> U.S. Department of State. *Kazakhstan 2007 Crime & Safety Report*, February 8, 2007.

terrorism and presence of land mines along the Kyrgyz-Uzbek border and in the Batken region. During the Tajik civil war, U.S. personnel faced various threats and some embassy personnel were evacuated during flare-ups of fighting. Two U.S. Embassy guards were killed in Dushanbe in February 1997 while off-site but in uniform.

After the bombing of U.S. embassies in Tanzania and Kenya in August 1998, and intense fighting in Dushanbe, U.S. embassy facilities in Dushanbe were deemed to be vulnerable and diplomatic staff were moved to Almaty in Kazakhstan. Some operations were resumed in 2000 and more were resumed in the wake of September 11, 2001. U.S. government personnel in Tajikistan often must travel in the embassy's armored cars with bodyguards, and are occasionally restricted from travel to certain areas because of safety concerns. U.S. officials have judged the embassy to be highly vulnerable to terrorism, including threats from the IMU and Al Qaeda.<sup>79</sup> The 2007 *Crime and Safety Report* warns that U.S. commercial interests could become potential targets of opportunity in Tajikistan, in part because the U.S. embassy in Tajikistan had become more secure (see below).<sup>80</sup>

Pakistani police in June 2002 reported the apprehension of three Uighurs with photographs and plans of U.S. embassies in Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan. The U.S. Embassy in Beijing accused ETIM of working with Al Qaeda to plan the attack against the U.S. Embassy in Kyrgyzstan.<sup>81</sup> In July 2005, the U.S. Embassy in Kyrgyzstan issued a Warden Message announcing that it had bolstered its security posture, and in October 2005 the State Department's Bureau of Consular Affairs warned that there continued to be indications that terrorist groups might be planning possible future attacks against U.S. interests in Kyrgyzstan, so the U.S. Embassy in Bishkek continued to maintain a heightened security posture. In September 2006, a U.S. military officer serving at the Ganci airbase in Kyrgyzstan allegedly was kidnapped but was eventually released. The 2007 *Crime and Safety Report* for Kazakhstan warns that increasing numbers of U.S. diplomats and other official personnel, including several Peace Corps volunteers, have been victims of crime.

Conferees on H.R. 4775 (Emergency Supplemental Appropriations for FY2002; P.L. 107-206) approved \$20.3 million for opening and securing diplomatic posts in Dushanbe, Tajikistan and Kabul, Afghanistan. Among other diplomatic premises in the region, Congress approved State Department requests for FY2002 and for FY2003 for designing and building secure embassy facilities in Tashkent, Uzbekistan and in Kazakhstan's new capital of Astana. The new embassy compound in Tashkent opened in February 2006 and that in Astana was dedicated in November 2006.

## Issues for Congress

Most in Congress have supported U.S. assistance to bolster independence and reforms in Central Asia and other NIS. Attention has included several hearings and legislation, the latter including earmarks at times for aid for Kyrgyzstan, sense of Congress provisions on U.S. policy toward Central Asia, statements and resolutions concerning violations of human rights in the region, and

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<sup>79</sup> Rashid, p. 166. U.S. Embassy Dushanbe. *Warden's Report*, July 17, 2005; *Warden Message*, December 17, 2005.

<sup>80</sup> U.S. Department of State. *Tajikistan 2007 Crime & Safety Report*, January 17, 2007.

<sup>81</sup> TASS, June 30, 2002; *ABC World News Tonight*, June 14, 2002.

endorsements of aid for energy development. (For details, see CRS Report RL32866, *U.S. Assistance to the Former Soviet Union*, by Curt Tarnoff.)

## **Should the United States Play a Prominent Role in Central Asia?**

The Administration and others have argued that the United States should emphasize ties with the Central Asian states. They maintain that U.S. interests do not perfectly coincide with those of its coalition partners and friends, that Turkey and other actors possess limited aid resources, and that the United States is in the strongest position as a superpower to influence democratization and respect for human rights in these new states. They stress that U.S. leadership in world efforts to provide humanitarian and economic reform aid will help alleviate the high levels of social distress that are exploited by anti-Western Islamic extremist groups seeking new members. Although many U.S. policymakers acknowledge a role for a democratizing Russia in the region, they stress that U.S. and other Western aid and investment strengthen the independence of the states and their openness to the West and forestall Russian or Chinese attempts to (re-)subjugate the region.

Those who object to a more forward U.S. policy toward Central Asia argue that the United States has historically had few interests in this region, and that as peace is established in Afghanistan, the region again will be less important to U.S. interests. They advocate limited U.S. involvement undertaken along with Turkey and other friends and coalition partners to ensure general U.S. goals of preventing strife, fostering democratization and regional cooperation, and improving human rights and the quality of life. Some objections to a forward U.S. policy might appear less salient given September 11, 2001, and other recent developments. For instance, it no longer seems possible to argue that anti-Western Islamic extremism will never threaten secular regimes or otherwise harm U.S. interests.

## **What Are U.S. Interests in Central Asia?**

Although a consensus appears to exist among most U.S. policymakers and others on the general desirability of fostering such objectives in Central Asia as democratization, the creation of free markets, trade and investment, integration with the West, and responsible security policies, there are varying views on the levels and types of U.S. involvement. Uzbekistan's decision in mid-2005 to ask the United States to vacate K2 has spurred the debate over what role the United States should play in the region. Some analysts argue that the region is "strategically tangential" to U.S. concerns for the stability of Afghanistan, Russia, China, Turkey, and the Persian Gulf, and for combating global human rights abuses, nuclear proliferation, and drug trafficking.<sup>82</sup> They point to the dangers of civil and ethnic conflict and terrorism in the region as reasons for the United States to eschew major involvement that might place U.S. personnel and citizens at risk. These analysts call for withdrawing U.S. military personnel from the region and depending on U.S. rapid deployments from other bases outside the region.<sup>83</sup>

Many of those who endorse continued or enhanced U.S. support for Central Asia argue that the United States has a vital interest in preventing the region from becoming an Afghanistan-like

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<sup>82</sup> Amy Jaffe, in Gennadiy Chufirin, ed., *The Security of the Caspian Sea Region*, Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press, 2001, p. 150.

<sup>83</sup> Wishnick, p. 35.

hotbed of terrorism aimed against U.S. interests.<sup>84</sup> They argue that political instability in Central Asia can produce spillover effects in important nearby states, including U.S. allies and friends such as Turkey. They also assert that the United States has a major interest in preventing outside terrorist regimes or groups from illicitly acquiring nuclear weapons-related materials and technology from the region. They also advocate the greater diversification of world energy supplies as a U.S. national security interest (see below, “How Significant Are Regional Energy Resources to U.S. Interests?”).

Calling for greater U.S. policy attention to Central Asia and South Caucasus, Senator Sam Brownback introduced “Silk Road” legislation in the 105<sup>th</sup> and 106<sup>th</sup> Congresses. Similar legislation was sponsored in the House by Representative Benjamin Gilman (105<sup>th</sup>) and Representative Doug Bereuter (106<sup>th</sup>).<sup>85</sup> In introducing the Silk Road Act in the 106<sup>th</sup> Congress, Senator Brownback pointed out that the Central Asian and South Caucasian states are “caught between world global forces that seek to have them under their control.” To counter such forces, he argued, the United States should emphasize democratization, the creation of free markets, and the development of energy and trade with the region to bolster its independence and pro-Western orientations. The Silk Road language was eventually enacted by reference in H.R. 3194 (Istook), Consolidated Appropriations Act for FY2000, and signed into law on November 29, 1999 (P.L. 106-113). The Silk Road language calls for enhanced policy and aid to support conflict amelioration, humanitarian needs, economic development, transport (including energy pipelines) and communications, border controls, democracy, and the creation of civil societies in the South Caucasian and Central Asian states.

Other congressional initiatives include the Security Assistance Act of 2000 (P.L. 106-280; signed into law on October 6, 2000), which authorizes aid to combat nuclear, biological, and chemical weapons and conventional weapons proliferation in the New Independent States. It authorized \$45.5 million in FY2001-FY2002 to assist GUAM to carry out provisions of the Silk Road Act to strengthen national control of borders and to promote independence and territorial sovereignty.

## **What Roles Should Outside Powers Play in the Region?**

Although many U.S. policymakers argue that a democratizing Russia could play a positive role in the region, they stress that U.S. and other Western aid and investment strengthen the independence of the states and forestall Russian attempts to dominate the region. Some observers warn that a more authoritarian Russia might soon seek to reabsorb Central Asia into a new empire. Others, however, discount such plans by a Russia facing immense internal economic, political, ethnic, and military disorder, but nonetheless endorse close monitoring of Russian activities that might infringe on the independence of the Soviet successor states. Some appear to acquiesce to Russia’s argument of historic rights to a “sphere of influence” in Central Asia that provides a reduced scope for U.S. involvement. Russia’s intentions in the region have become more murky since it has faltered in democratizing, according to many observers.

According to some observers, Administration policy should focus more clearly on refereeing Russian, Iranian, and Chinese influence in the region, since these states are bound to play roles in

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<sup>84</sup> Charles Fairbanks, *The National Interest*, Summer 2002, pp. 45-53.

<sup>85</sup> The Silk Road language amends the Foreign Assistance Act of 1961 by adding a chapter 12. The chapter supercedes or draws authority from the Freedom Support Act (P.L. 102-511), which constitutes chapter 11 of the Foreign Assistance Act of 1961, and adds otherwise to the authority of the Freedom Support Act.



the region, with the aim of maximizing the independence of the Central Asian states and protecting U.S. interests. U.S. interests may correspond to other outside states' interests in political and economic stability and improved transport in the region, so that the coordination of some activities in the region becomes possible.<sup>86</sup> Alternatively, U.S. interests might conflict with those of Russia, Iran, or China, leading to compromises, tradeoffs, or deadlock. The U.S. interest in restricting Iran's financial ability to sponsor international terrorism, for instance, may conflict with desires by Central Asian states to build pipelines through Iran. U.S.-Iranian rapprochement might contribute to a less hostile Iranian attitude toward U.S. regional investment. Poor U.S.-Iranian relations and questions about Russia's role contributed to U.S. support for the BTC pipeline. While the Administration has supported a role for Turkey in the region, others argue that its disagreements in 2003 with U.S. policy toward Iraq indicate that it may not serve optimally as a proxy for U.S. interests in Central Asia.

The United States and Russia agreed to set up a working group on Afghanistan in June 2000 that assumed greater importance in the Bush Administration, particularly after September 11, 2001. Headed on the U.S. side by then-First Deputy Secretary of State Richard Armitage and on the Russian side by Vyacheslav Trubnikov, it was central to obtaining Russian acquiescence to the U.S. use of military facilities in Central Asia, with Armitage visiting Moscow just days after September 11, 2001. In May 2002, the group's mandate reportedly was expanded to more broadly cover counter-terrorism in Central Asia, the South Caucasus, and South Asia. At the meeting in January 2003, Armitage reportedly reiterated that the United States would pull its troops out of Central Asia at the end of the anti-terrorism campaign in Afghanistan. At meetings in December 2005 and September 2006, the two sides proclaimed that they were cooperating on countering terrorism in Afghanistan. In late 2007, however, Russia raised concerns that such cooperation was lagging, since no meeting of the Counter-Terrorism Working Group had been held. U.S. State Department Coordinator for Counter-Terrorism Dell Dailey reportedly responded by stating that U.S.-Russia counter-terrorism cooperation remained active and that a meeting of the working group would be held in early 2008.<sup>87</sup>

## **How Significant Are Regional Energy Resources to U.S. Interests?**

The Bush Administration's national energy policy report, released in May 2001, posited that the exploitation of Caspian energy resources could not only benefit the economies of the region, but also help mitigate possible world supply disruptions, a major U.S. security goal. It recommended that the President direct U.S. agencies to support building the BTC pipeline, facilitate oil companies operating in Kazakhstan to use the pipeline, support constructing a Baku-Turkey natural gas pipeline to export Azerbaijani gas, and otherwise encourage the Caspian regional states to provide a stable and inviting business climate for energy and infrastructure development. It averred that the building of the pipelines will enhance energy supply diversification, including for Georgia and Turkey.<sup>88</sup> Caspian regional oil exports from Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan, and

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<sup>86</sup> On U.S. cooperation in a "regional concert," see Charles Fairbanks, S. Frederick Staar, C. Richard Nelson, and Kenneth Weisbrode, *Strategic Assessment of Central Asia*, The Atlantic Council and the Central Asia-Caucasus Institute, January 2001. See also Stephen Blank, *The Future of Transcaspian Security*, Carlisle, PA, U.S. Army War College, August 2002, pp. 30-31.

<sup>87</sup> *ITAR-TASS*, November 28, 2007; *ITAR-TASS*, December 13, 2007.

<sup>88</sup> Among Congressional action, the Foreign Operations Appropriations Act for FY1998 (P.L. 105-118) stated that the Central Asian and South Caucasian states are a major East-West transport route and contain substantial oil and gas reserves that will increase the diversity of supplies to the United States. Congress urged targeting policy and aid to (continued...)

Turkmenistan might have constituted about 1% of world oil exports, and gas exports might have constituted about 2% in 2004 (latest date of information), according to the U.S. Energy Department.<sup>89</sup> Oil and gas exports are projected to increase in coming years, making these countries of incremental significance as world suppliers, according to this view.

Critics of Administration policy question the economic viability of BTC and trans-Caspian pipeline routes given uncertainties about regional stability, ownership of Caspian Sea fields, world oil and gas prices, and the size of regional reserves. They question whether the oil and other natural resources in these new states are vital to U.S. security and point out that they are, in any event, unlikely to be fully available to Western markets for many years. Analyst Amy Jaffe argues that Caspian energy “hardly seems worth the risks” of an enhanced U.S. presence.<sup>90</sup>

Some of those who oppose U.S. policy also juxtapose an emphasis on energy development in these states to what they term the neglect of broader-based economic reforms that they argue would better serve the population of the region. Other critics argue that the Administration’s policy against energy routes and projects involving Iran makes it more likely that the Central Asian states will have to rely for several more years on Russia’s willingness to export their oil and gas.

## **What U.S. Security Involvement is Appropriate?**

The events of September 11, 2001, transformed the U.S. security relationship with Central Asia, as the region actively supported U.S.-led coalition anti-terrorism efforts in Afghanistan. These efforts were a top U.S. national security concern, but a major question is how the region may be regarded if Afghanistan becomes more stable. Some observers advocate maintaining the U.S. security relationship even if Afghanistan becomes more stable and the threat of Al Qaeda and other terrorism based in the area recedes. They stress that Central Asia was host to Soviet-era weapons of mass destruction and associated research and development facilities, and that residual technologies, materials, and personnel might fall prey to terrorist states or groups. They view military education and training programs as fostering the creation of a professional, Western-style military and democratic civil-military relations, and reducing chances of military coups. Training that these militaries receive through PFP is multinational in scope, involving cooperation among regional militaries, with the purpose of spurring these states to continue to work together. They also argue that as Iran increases its military capabilities, including missiles and possibly nuclear weapons, the Central Asian states may necessarily seek closer countervailing ties with the United States. They argue that a major dilemma of current policy is that while the United States proclaims vital interests in the region, it also states that military basing arrangements are temporary. This makes the U.S. commitment appear uncertain, spurring the Central Asian states to continue their search for security ties with other outside powers, these analysts warn.

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(...continued)

support independence, friendly relations, conflict resolution, democracy, free markets, integration with the West, and U.S. business and investment in these states. The conferees on Omnibus Appropriations for FY1999 (including foreign operations; P.L. 105-277) recommended that up to \$10 million be made available to promote Turkmen energy development, and endorsed an east-west energy corridor that would exclude building pipelines through Iran.

<sup>89</sup> Percentages derived from data on production, consumption, and exports by the Energy Department, Energy Information Administration, <http://www.eia.doe.gov/>.

<sup>90</sup> Jaffe, pp. 145, 150.

The question of who the United States should partner with in Central Asia is also topical. Before Uzbekistan requested in mid-2005 that the United States vacate K2, it seemed that some in the Administration emphasized the strategic importance of building ties with Uzbekistan. Others emphasized ties with Kazakhstan. In the case of Uzbekistan, its central location in the region and sizeable population and other resources (including energy) were stressed. Energy and other resources were also stressed in the case of Kazakhstan, as well as its huge territory and lengthy borders. Some observers argued that Uzbekistan was more likely to become unstable because of its more authoritarian government, so was a less suitable U.S. strategic partner. Recently, it appears that the Administration is emphasizing security ties with Kazakhstan. Some observers argue that Kazakhstan's long border with Russia makes it likely to continue close security ties with Russia.<sup>91</sup>

Critics of greater U.S. security involvement in the region argue that the United States should primarily seek to encourage regional demilitarization. They oppose providing formal security guarantees to regional states and urge the pullout of U.S. bases once the Taliban threat has abated and Al Qaeda largely roused from Afghanistan. Some analysts warn that increased U.S. engagement in the region, including military basing, is unlikely to soon turn the countries into free market democracies, and will link the United States to the regimes in the eyes of the local populations. This may exacerbate anti-American Islamic extremism, place U.S. personnel in danger, stretch U.S. military capabilities, and antagonize China and Russia. Long-term U.S. basing in the region could in particular harm U.S.-Russia ties, by giving Russian hardliners ammunition in their efforts to encourage President Putin to take a harder line against the United States.<sup>92</sup>

## **Should the United States Try to Foster Democratization?**

Although Central Asia's leaders have appeared to counterpose stability to democratization and opted for stability (except perhaps in Kyrgyzstan), the Bush Administration and other observers generally have viewed the two concepts as complementary, particularly in the long term. In recent years, the Bush Administration has appeared to place greater diplomatic emphasis on democratization in the region, in parallel with policy toward Iraq and the wider Middle East. To some degree, this emphasis has tracked with increased congressional concerns over human rights conditions in Central Asia. According to some critics, the Administration's protests over human rights abuses at Andijon contributed to the loss of U.S. military access to K2 and other security ties with Uzbekistan. These critics suggest that simultaneous emphases on democratization and security ties proved corrosive to both goals, and that the United States instead should carefully engage with the Central Asian states to maintain important security relationships and cautiously encourage them to eventually emulate the positive features of Turkish or other Islamic democracies.<sup>93</sup>

Supporters of the Administration's reaction to the events at Andijon and other observers have argued that a policy stress on gradual political change connotes support for the stability of the

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<sup>91</sup> Jacquelyn Davis and Michael Sweeney, *Central Asia in U.S. Strategy and Operational Planning*, The Institute for Foreign Policy Analysis, February 2004, p. vi.

<sup>92</sup> Andrew J. Bacevich, *The National Interest*, Summer 2002, pp. 45-53.

<sup>93</sup> Stephen Blank, *U.S. Interests in Central Asia and the Challenges to Them*, US Army War College, March 2007. Some observers assert that Uzbekistan's disappointment with U.S. economic and military assistance played a greater role in the deterioration of U.S.-Uzbek relations than U.S. complaints about democratization and human rights.

current authoritarian leaders in the region. They have warned that the populations of these states would come to view the United States as propping up these leaders and that such authoritarianism encourages the countervailing rise of Islamic fundamentalism as an alternative channel of dissent. Some of these observers have supported reducing or cutting off most aid to repressive governments that widely violate human rights and have rejected arguments that U.S. interests in anti-terrorism, nonproliferation, regional cooperation, trade, and investment outweigh concerns over democratization and human rights. These observers urge greater U.S. assistance to grass-roots democracy and human rights organizations in Central Asia and more educational exchanges.<sup>94</sup>

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<sup>94</sup> Some proponents of this view had criticized the engagement policies of the Clinton and early Bush Administrations. Wishnick, p. 29; Christian Caryl, "Collateral Victory," *Washington Monthly*, November 1, 2002, pp. 21-27; *Central Asia in U.S. Strategy and Operational Planning*, pp. iii-iv.

## Appendix. Selected Outside Players

### Russia

For the Central Asian states, the challenge is to maintain useful ties with Russia without allowing it undue influence. This concern is most evident in Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan. Kazakhstan, because of its shared 4,200 mile border with Russia and its relatively large ethnic Russian population, is highly vulnerable to Russian influence. Uzbekistan is interested in asserting its own regional power. Alternatively, Tajikistan's President Rakhmanov has relied to some extent on Russian security assistance to stay in power.

Russia's behavior in Central Asia partly depends on alternative futures of Russian domestic politics, though regardless of scenario, Russia will retain some economic and other influence in the region as a legacy of the political and transport links developed during Tsarist and Soviet times. The long-term impact of September 11, 2001, on Russia's influence over the Central Asian states depends on the duration and scope of U.S. and coalition presence in the region, Russia's countervailing policies, and the fate of Afghanistan.

Prior to September 11, 2001, the Putin Administration had tried to strengthen Russia's interests in the region while opposing the growth of U.S. and other influence. After September 11, 2001, Uzbekistan reaffirmed its more assertive policy of lessening its security dependence on Russia by granting conditional overflight rights and other support to the U.S.-led coalition, nudging a reluctant Putin regime to accede to a coalition presence in the region in keeping with Russia's own support to the Northern Alliance to combat the Taliban. Russia's other reasons for permitting the increased coalition presence included its interests in boosting some economic and other ties to the West and its hope of regaining influence in a post-Taliban Afghanistan. On September 19, 2001, Russian Foreign Minister Igor Ivanov indicated that the nature of support given by the Central Asian states to the U.S.-led coalition was up to each state, and President Putin reiterated this point on September 24, 2001, giving Russia's assent to cooperation between these states and the United States. Russia cooperated with Central Asia in supporting U.S. and coalition efforts, including by quickly sending military equipment and advisors to assist the Northern Alliance in attacks on the Taliban.

Russian officials have emphasized interests in strategic security and economic ties with Central Asia, and concerns over the treatment of ethnic Russians. Strategic concerns have focused on drug trafficking and regional conflict, and the region's role as a buffer to Islamic extremism. Russia's economic decline in the 1990s and demands by Central Asia caused Russia to reduce its security presence. President Putin may have reversed this trend, although the picture is mixed. About 11,000 Russian Border Troops (mostly ethnic Tajiks under Russian command) formerly defended "CIS borders" in Tajikistan. Russia announced on June 14, 2005, that it had handed over the last guard-house along the Afghan-Tajik border to Tajik troops. Russian border forces were largely phased out in Kyrgyzstan in 1999. In late 1999, the last Russian military advisors left Turkmenistan. In 1999, Uzbekistan withdrew from the CST, citing its ineffectiveness and obtrusiveness. Russia justified a 1999 military base accord with Tajikistan by citing the Islamic extremist threat to the CIS.

In an apparent shift toward a more activist Russian role in Central Asia, in January 2000, then-Acting President Putin approved a "national security concept" that termed foreign efforts to "weaken" Russia's "position" in Central Asia a security threat. In April 2000, Russia called for

the members of the CST to approve the creation of rapid reaction forces, including in Central Asia, to combat terrorism emanating from Afghanistan. Russian officials suggested that such a force might launch pre-emptive strikes on Afghan terrorist bases.

A May 2001 CST summit approved the creation of a Central Asian Rapid Deployment Force composed (at least on paper) of nine Russian, Kazakh, Kyrgyz, and Tajik country-based battalions of 4,000 troops and a headquarters in Bishkek. This initiative seemed in part aimed to protect Russian regional influence in the face of nascent U.S. and NATO anti-terrorism moves in the region. A regional branch of the CIS Anti-Terrorism Center, composed of intelligence agencies, opened in Bishkek, Kyrgyzstan, in January 2002 (this organization reportedly has proven ineffective in sharing intelligence data). Russia's threats of pre-emptive strikes against the Taliban prompted them in May 2000 to warn the Central Asian states of reprisals if they permitted Russia to use their bases for strikes. At the June 2000 U.S.-Russia summit, the two presidents agreed to set up a working group to examine Afghan-related terrorism, and the group held two meetings prior to September 11, 2001. These events prior to September 11, 2001, helped to ease the way for Russian and Central Asian assistance to the U.S.-led coalition in Afghanistan.

Soon after September 11, 2001, Russia seemed to reverse the policy of drawing down its military presence in Central Asia by increasing its troop presence in Tajikistan by a reported 1,500. In mid-June 2002, Russia also signed military accords with Kyrgyzstan extending leases on military facilities to fifteen years (including, amazingly, a naval test base), opening shuttered Kyrgyz defense industries, and training Kyrgyz troops. Most significantly, Kyrgyzstan also agreed that its Kant airfield outside its capital of Bishkek could be used as a base for the Central Asian rapid reaction forces, marking a major re-deployment of Russian forces into the country. In signing the accords, Russian Defense Minister Sergey Ivanov declared that they marked Russia's help—along with the U.S.-led coalition and China—in combating terrorism, were necessary for Russia to monitor the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, and marked Russia's intention to maintain a military presence in the region. Attack jets, transports, jet trainers, helicopters, and Russian personnel began to be deployed at Kant at the end of 2002.

Russia's military deployments at Kant appeared at least partially intended to check and monitor U.S. regional military influence, and these intentions also were reflected in support for the 2005 SCO communique calling for the closure of U.S.-led coalition bases in Central Asia. Taking advantage of Uzbekistan's souring relations with many Western countries, Russia signed a Treaty on Allied Relations with Uzbekistan in November 2005 that contains provisions similar to those in the CST that call for mutual defense consultations in the event of a threat to either party. In 2006, Uzbekistan rejoined the CST. Evidence that Russia may seek to minimize, but not immediately eliminate, U.S. influence was indicated by a statement by Deputy Foreign Minister Aleksandr Alekseyev, who proclaimed in December 2006 that "Russia is interested in continued operation of [the Ganci] airbase for a certain period, until the terrorist threat emanating from Afghanistan is eliminated."<sup>95</sup>

Russian economic policy in Central Asia has been contradictory, involving pressures to both cooperate with and to oppose US and Western interests. Russia has cut off economic subsidies to Central Asia and presses demands for the repayment of energy and other debts the states owe Russia. Russia increasingly has swapped this debt for equity in strategic and profitable energy and military industries throughout Central Asia. Its opposition to U.S. and Western private

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<sup>95</sup> CEDR, December 11, 2006, Doc. No. CEP-9005.

investment in the region initially led it to demand that Caspian Sea oil and gas resources be shared in common among littoral states and to insist that oil pipeline routes transit Russian territory to Russian Black Sea ports. Russia's oil discoveries in the Caspian Sea, however, contributed to its decision to sign accords with Kazakhstan in 1998 and with Azerbaijan in 2001 on seabed borders.

Russian energy firms have become partners with U.S. and Western firms in several regional oil and gas development consortiums. Nonetheless, Russia continues to lobby for pipeline routes through its territory. President Putin has called for the Central Asian states to form a Eurasian Gas Alliance to "export through a single channel," which Russian media have speculated means that Putin wants to counter U.S. energy influence in the region. Instead of opposing U.S. and Western private investment and business in the region, some Russians argue that enhanced cooperation would best serve Russian national interests and its oil and other companies. Russia has been wary of growing Chinese economic influence in the region.

The region's continuing economic ties with Russia are encouraged by the existence of myriad Moscow-bound transport routes, the difficulty of trade through war-torn Afghanistan, and U.S. opposition to ties with Iran. Also, there are still many inter-enterprise and equipment supply links between Russia and these states. While seeking ties with Russia to provide for some security and economic needs, at least in the short term, the Central Asian states have tried with varying success to resist or modify various Russian policies viewed as diluting their sovereignty, such as Russian calls for dual citizenship and closer CIS economic and security ties. Karimov and Nazarbayev have been harsh critics of what they have viewed as Russian tendencies to treat Central Asia as an "unequal partner."

The safety of Russians in Central Asia is a populist concern in Russia, but has in practice mainly served as a political stalking horse for those in Russia advocating the "reintegration" of former "Russian lands." Ethnic Russians residing in Central Asia have had rising concerns about employment, language, and other policies or practices they deem discriminatory and many have emigrated, contributing to their decline from 20 million in 1989 to 6.6 million in 2001. They now constitute 12% of the population of Central Asia, according to the CIS Statistics Agency. Remaining Russians tend to be elderly or low-skilled. In Kazakhstan, ethnic Kazakhs have again become a majority.

## **Afghanistan**

The stability of Afghanistan is of central concern to Central Asia, China, and Russia. Particular concerns of Central Asia in recent years have focused on the export of drugs and Islamic extremism from Afghanistan. Historical trade routes facilitate the smuggling of drugs and other contraband through the region to Russian and European markets. Central Asia's leaders do not want Islamic extremists to use bases in Afghanistan, as the Tajik opposition once did. They objected to the refuge the Taliban provided for the IMU and for terrorist Osama Bin Laden, who allegedly contributed financing and training for Islamic extremists throughout Central Asia who endeavored to overthrow governments in that region.

Several Central Asian ethnic groups reside in northern Afghanistan, raising concerns in Central Asia about their fates. Tajikistan has been concerned about the fate of 6.2 million ethnic Tajiks residing in Afghanistan. Uzbekistan, likewise, has concerns about 1.5 million ethnic Uzbeks in Afghanistan. Karimov has supported ethnic Uzbek paramilitary leader Abdul-ul-Rashid Dostum in Afghanistan. Dostum lost to Taliban forces in August 1998 and exited Afghanistan, but

returned to help lead Northern Alliance forces to victory post-September 11, 2001. Iran and Tajikistan supported ethnic Tajik Ahmad Shah Masood, who was killed on September 9, 2001, allegedly by Al Qaeda operatives. Iran's massing of troops on the Afghan border in August 1998 in response to the Taliban's takeover of Mazar-e-Sharif and killing of Iranian diplomats and Shiite civilians also gave support to Masood. Turkmenistan's concerns about the status of half a million ethnic Turkmen residing in Afghanistan, and its hopes for possible energy pipelines through Afghanistan, led it to stress workable relations with both the Taliban and the successor government.

Tajikistan was especially challenged by the Taliban's growing power. A Taliban victory in Afghanistan threatened to present it with regimes in both the north (Uzbekistan) and south (Afghanistan) that pressed for undue influence. Iran and Uzbekistan backed different sides in the Tajik civil war, but both opposed the Taliban in Afghanistan. Tajik opposition ties with Iran provided friction with the Taliban. Tajikistan's instability and regional concerns caused the Rakhmanov government to rely more on Russia and, by granting formal basing rights to Russia, antagonized Uzbekistan and the Taliban.

As Afghanistan stabilizes, Central Asian states will be able to establish more trade ties, including with Pakistan. Hopes for the construction of a gas pipeline from Turkmenistan to Pakistan were evidenced by the signing of a framework agreement in December 2002 by the late President Niyazov, Afghan President Hamed Karzai, and Pakistan's Prime Minister Mir Zafarullah Khan. The problems of drug production in Afghanistan and trafficking through Central Asia have increased, however, in part because the Afghan government remains weak despite the hopeful success of the 2004 presidential and 2005 legislative elections.<sup>96</sup> Interest in regional stability led Afghanistan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan, China, Iran, and Pakistan to sign a "Declaration of Good Neighborly Relations" in Kabul in December 2002 pledging mutual respect for sovereignty and territorial integrity. Russia's attempts to influence developments in Afghanistan are facilitated by its basing arrangement with Tajikistan, but its favored warlords were largely excluded in December 2004 from the new Karzai government. (See also CRS Report RL30588, *Afghanistan: Post-War Governance, Security, and U.S. Policy*, by Kenneth Katzman.)

## China

China's objectives in Central Asia include ensuring border security, non-belligerent neighbors, and access to trade and natural resources. In April 1996, the presidents of Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Russia, and Tajikistan traveled to Shanghai to sign a treaty with Chinese President Jiang Zemin pledging the sanctity and substantial demilitarization of borders. They signed protocols that they would not harbor or support separatists, aimed at China's efforts to quash separatism in its Uighur Autonomous Region of Xinjiang Province, which borders Central Asia. According to the U.S. State Department, China continues to commit human rights abuses against the Uighurs, an Islamic and Turkic people.<sup>97</sup> In April 1997, the five presidents met again in Moscow to sign a follow-on treaty demilitarizing the 4,000 mile former Soviet border with China. In May 2001, the parties admitted Uzbekistan as a member and formed the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO), and agreed to pursue common antiterrorist actions through a center established in the region. In theory, China could send troops into Central Asia at the request of

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<sup>96</sup> S. Frederick Starr, *The National Interest*, Winter 2004/2005.

<sup>97</sup> U.S. Department of State. *Country Reports on Human Rights Practices for 2006*. Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, March 6, 2007.



one of the states.<sup>98</sup> The states signed a Shanghai Convention on joint fighting against terrorism, extremism and separatism, viewed by some observers as Russia's and China's effort to gain greater support by the Central Asian states for combat against extremists and regime opponents of the two major powers. China's goals in the SCO echo its general regional goals noted above, as well as containing U.S. influence.

After September 11, 2001, SCO members did not respond collectively to U.S. overtures but mainly as individual states. China encouraged Pakistan to cooperate with the United States. China benefitted from the U.S.-led coalition actions in Afghanistan against the IMU and the Taliban, since these groups had been providing training and sustenance to Uighur extremists. Nonetheless, the U.S. presence in Central Asia poses a challenge to China's aspirations to become the dominant Asian power.

Most analysts do not anticipate Chinese territorial expansion into Central Asia, though China is seeking greater economic influence. China is a major trading partner for the Central Asian states and may become the dominant economic influence in the region. In comparison, Turkey's trade with the region is much less than China's. Central Asia's China trade exceeded \$1 billion annually by the late 1990s.

Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan have been deft in building relations with China. They have cooperated with China in delineating borders, building roads, and increasing trade ties. The construction of an oil pipeline from Kazakhstan to China's Xinjiang region marks China's growing economic influence in the region (see below). However, officials in these states also have been concerned about Chinese intentions and the spillover effects of tensions in Xinjiang. Some have raised concerns about growing numbers of Chinese "suitcase" traders and immigrants, and there are tensions over issues like water resources. China's crackdown on dissidence in Xinjiang creates particular concern in Kazakhstan, because over one million ethnic Kazakhs reside in Xinjiang and many Uighurs reside in Kazakhstan. Some ethnic Kyrgyz also reside in Xinjiang. On the other hand, Kazakhstan fears that Uighur separatism in Xinjiang could spread among Uighurs residing in Kazakhstan, who may demand an alteration of Kazakh borders to create a unified Uighur "East Turkestan." China's relations with Tajikistan improved with the signing of a major agreement in May 2002 delineating a final section of borders in the Pamir Mountains shared by the two states.

In 1993, China abandoned its policy of energy self-sufficiency, making Central Asia's energy resources attractive. In September 1997, Kazakhstan granted China's National Petroleum Corporation (CNPC) production rights to develop major oil fields, including the Aktyubinsk Region of northwestern Kazakhstan. China pledged to build a 1,900 mile trans-Kazakh pipeline to Xinjiang within five years (and a shorter pipeline to the Turkmen border). It appeared that China's attention flagged in the late 1990s, and Kazakhstan threatened to cancel some energy investment accords. More recently, China's booming economy has increased its need for energy imports, and hence its need to diversify suppliers to safeguard its energy security, causing renewed attention to joint energy projects with Kazakhstan. In 2005, CNPC purchased the Canadian-based company PetroKazakhstan, giving it ownership of refineries and control over production licenses for twelve oilfields and exploration licenses for five blocks. Kazakhstan and China completed construction in mid-2006 of an oil pipeline from Atasu in central Kazakhstan to

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<sup>98</sup> China and Kyrgyzstan held joint border exercises in October 2002, the first under SCO auspices and the first by the Chinese People's Liberation Army on foreign soil. *CEDR*, September 19, 2002, Doc. No. CPP-031.

the Xinjiang region of China. Initial capacity is 146.6 million barrels per year. At Atasu, it links to another pipeline from Kumkol, also in central Kazakhstan, and will eventually link to Atyrau on Kazakhstan's Caspian Sea coast. In late 2006, the state-owned China International Trust and Investment Corporation (CITIC) purchased the Canadian-based Nations Energy's Karazhanbas oil and gas field in Kazakhstan with proved reserves in excess of 340 million barrels of oil and current production of over 50,000 barrels of oil per day.

## **Iran**

Iran has pursued limited economic interests in Central Asia and has not fomented the violent overthrow of the region's secular regimes. Its economic problems and technological backwardness have prevented it from playing a major investment role in the region. Iran's support for the Northern Alliance against the Taliban placed it on the same side as most of the Central Asian states and Russia. Iran has had good ties with Turkmenistan, having established rail and pipeline links. Iran's relations with other Central Asian states are more problematic. Kazakhstan's ties with Iran have improved in recent years with a visit by Iran's then-president Mohammad Khatami to Astana in April 2002, during which a declaration on friendly relations was signed. Nazarbayev continues to urge Iran to agree to a median-line delineation of Caspian Sea borders rather than demand territorial concessions (Kazakhstan claims the largest area of seabed), and dangles prospects for energy pipelines through Iran and enhanced trade as incentives. Uzbek-Iranian relations have been mercurial. Iran allegedly harbored some elements of the IMU, creating Uzbek-Iranian tensions. Relations appeared somewhat improved after 2003 as both states cooperated on rebuilding projects in Afghanistan and as Uzbekistan attempted to develop trade and transport links to Middle Eastern markets.

The establishment of the U.S. military presence in Central Asia and Afghanistan after September 11, 2001, has directly challenged Iran's security and interests in the region by surrounding Iran with U.S. friends and allies, although Iran also has gained from the U.S.-led defeat of the Taliban and coalition operations in Iraq. Iran views the U.S.-backed BTC pipeline and its regional military presence as part of U.S. efforts to make Central Asia part of an anti-Iranian bloc. During the 1990s, Iran and Russia shared similar interests in retaining their influence in the Caspian region by hindering the growth of U.S. and Western influence. They also opposed U.S. encouragement of Turkey's role in the region. They used the issue of the status of the Caspian Sea to hinder Western oil development efforts. With Russia's adoption of a more conciliatory stance regarding Caspian seabed development, Iran in 2001 became isolated in still calling for the Sea to be held in common, or alternatively for each of the littoral states to control 20% of the Sea (and perhaps, any assets). This ongoing stance and U.S. opposition have restrained Kazakhstan's interest in building pipelines through Iran to the Persian Gulf. (See also CRS Report RL32048, *Iran: U.S. Concerns and Policy Responses*, by Kenneth Katzman.)

## **Turkey**

Turkey's strategic interests have included enhancing its economic and security relations with both the South Caucasian and Central Asian states along the "Silk Road" to bolster its access to regional oil and gas. Turkey's role as an energy conduit also would enhance its influence and appeal as a prospective member of the EU, according to some Turkish views. Turkey desires the abatement of ethnic conflict in the Caspian region that threatens energy development. While Turkey plays a significant and U.S.-supported role in trade and cultural affairs in Central Asia among the region's mainly Turkic peoples, it has been hampered by its own political struggles

between secularists and Islamic forces and has been obsessed with its own economic and ethnic problems. Also, the authoritarian leaders in Central Asia have been reluctant to embrace the “Turkish model” of relatively free markets and democracy. Perhaps a sign of greater interest in forging ties, Turkey hosted a meeting in November 2006 of Turkic heads of state (the last meeting was in 2001), which was attended by the presidents of Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan, and by Turkmenistan’s ambassador to Turkey.

Russia has opposed Turkish influence in Central Asia and the Caspian region, including Turkey’s building of gas and oil pipelines (the BTC oil pipeline from Azerbaijan’s Caspian Sea fields to Turkey’s Mediterranean Sea port at Ceyhan has provided Kazakhstan with another oil export route circumventing Russia).

## The South Caucasus

Central Asia is linked with the South Caucasus region as an historic and re-emerging transport corridor. Construction and plans for major pipeline and transport routes from Central Asia through the South Caucasus region to Europe make Central Asia’s economic security somewhat dependent on the stability of the South Caucasus. At the same time, the authoritarian Central Asian leaders have been concerned that democratization in Georgia could inspire dissension against their rule.

**Table A-1. Central Asia: Basic Facts**

Central Asian State	Kaz.	Kyr.	Taj.	Turk.	Uzb.	Total
Territory (000 sq. mi.)	1,100	77	55.8	190	174.5	1,597.3
Population (2007; Millions)	15.24	5.28	7.08	6	27.78	61.38
Gross Domestic Product (Bill. Dollars, 2007, Purchasing Power Parity)	170.3	10.38	11.87	47.37	62.27	302.19
GDP per capita (Dollars)	11,100	2,000	2,000	9,200	2,200	5,300 (Avg.)
Proven Oil Reserves (Billion Barrels)	9-40	40	12	0.5-1.7	0.3-0.59	61.8-94.29
Natural Gas Reserves (Tr. Cubic Feet)	65	0.2	0.2	71	66.2	202.6
Size of Military	65,800	12,500	7,600	26,000	55,000	166,900
FY2007 U.S. Aid Estimated (\$millions)	70.7	36.55	35.86	12.48	18.99	178.04 <sup>a</sup>
—of which: Security Assistance (\$millions)	51.04	5.05	10.96	1.72	4.19	72.96
Administration Request FY2008 (\$millions; Foreign Operations) <sup>b</sup>	24.315	31.429	32.12	8.43	9.374	108.168 <sup>c</sup>
—of which: Security Assistance (\$millions) <sup>b</sup>	8.4	8.7	14.94	1.45	1.5	34.99

**Sources:** U.S. Central Intelligence Agency. *The World Factbook*; U.S. Energy Information Administration, Department of Energy. *Caspian Sea Region*, January 2007; U.S. Energy Information Administration. *Central Asia Region*, 2002 (data for Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan); International Institute of Strategic Studies. *The Military Balance*, February 2007; Department of State. Office of the Coordinator of U.S. Assistance to Europe and Eurasia. Preliminary data for FY2007; Department of State. *Congressional Presentation for Foreign Operations, FY2008*.

- a. Includes Central Asia Regional Funding of \$3.46 million.
- b. Excludes Defense and Energy Department funds and food aid. Includes Peace Corps funds.
- c. Includes Central Asia Regional Funding of \$2.5 million.

**Table A-2. U.S. Government FY1992-FY2005 Budgeted Security Assistance to Central Asia, FREEDOM Support Act, and Agency Budgets**

(millions of dollars)

Agency <sup>a</sup>	Program	Kazakhstan	Kyrgyz Republic	Tajikistan	Turkmenistan	Uzbekistan	Total
State	Export Control and Related Border Security Assistance (EXBS)	9.85	13.59	3.84	1.35	8.60	37.23
State	Law Enforcement Assistance	11.92	17.36	17.24	5.13	16.26	68.33
State	Nonproliferation of WMD Expertise	10.50	1.25			3.25	15.00
USDA	Nonproliferation of WMD Expertise	6.29				2.52	8.81
DOE	Initiatives for Proliferation Prevention	0.67					0.67
DOE	Nuclear Reactor Safety	7.42	1.20				8.62
NSF	Civilian R & D Foundation (CRDF)	4.05	2.50	0.01		4.90	11.46
NRC	Nuclear Reactor Safety	6.23					6.23
HHS	Nonproliferation of WMD Expertise	3.39					3.39
EPA	Nonproliferation of WMD Expertise	1.52					1.52
DOJ	Law Enforcement Assistance	0.03	0.03			0.86	0.92
DHS/Customs	Export Control and Related Border Security Assistance (EXBS)		9.70			17.80	27.50
ESF: USAID	Democratic Reform			0.32			0.32
NADR: State	Anti-Terrorism Assistance (ATA)	5.06	2.28	1.18	0.02	6.98	15.52
NADR: State	Export Control and Related Border Security Assistance (EXBS)	9.36	5.00	8.50	5.29	6.56	34.71
FMF: State	Foreign Military Financing	24.54	27.51	6.19	4.73	52.95	115.92
IMET: State	International Military Education and Training (IMET)	7.23	5.8	1.30	3.13	5.12	22.58
INCLE: State	Law Enforcement Assistance			9.00	2.00		11.00
NADR: State	Nonproliferation and Disarmament Fund	2.42				0.91	3.33
NADR: State	Nonproliferation of WMD Expertise	8.50	4.10	1.4		6.04	20.03
PKO: State	Peacekeeping Operations	2.00					2.00

Agency <sup>a</sup>	Program	Kazakhstan	Kyrgyz Republic	Tajikistan	Turkmenistan	Uzbekistan	Total
NADR: State	Small Arms/Light Weapons Destruction	0.30		0.22			0.52
NADR: USDA	Nonproliferation of WMD Expertise	2.68		0.65		4.66	7.99
DOE	Global (Comprehensive) Threat Reduction Initiative	86.74					86.74
DOE	Material Protection, Control, and Accounting (MPCA)	25.80	1.10	0.10		4.00	31.00
DOE	Nonproliferation and International Security Program	15.24	0.07			7.77	23.08
DOE	Nuclear Reactor Safety	7.24				1.20	8.44
DOE	Russian Transition Initiative	8.65					8.65
DOD/CTR	Chain of Custody Programs	33.02					33.02
DOD	Counter-Narcotics		5.30	9.60	4.90	2.30	22.77 <sup>b</sup>
DOD/CTR	Demilitarization	35.64					35.64
DOD/CTR	Destruction and Dismantlement Program	202.45				93.23	295.68
DOD	International Counter-proliferation Programs	3.18	2.02	0.03	1.14	4.14	10.51
DOD	Warsaw Initiative (Partnership for Peace)	4.54	2.47	0.11	0.30	3.80	11.39 <sup>c</sup>
NSF	Civilian R & D Foundation (CRDF)	0.38	0.57			0.15	1.10
NADR:HHS	Nonproliferation of WMD Expertise	1.00					1.00
NADR:EPA	Nonproliferation of WMD Expertise	1.14					1.44
<b>Total</b>		<b>549.25</b>	<b>101.84</b>	<b>59.68</b>	<b>27.98</b>	<b>254.04</b>	<b>994.05<sup>d</sup></b>

**Source:** State Department, Coordinator of U.S. Assistance to the New Independent States.

- a. Includes regional funding of \$420,000.
- b. Includes regional funding of \$670,000.
- c. Includes regional funding of \$170,000.
- d. Total includes regional funding.

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